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RECREATIONS  
OF  
A LITERARY MAN



RECREATIONS  
OF  
A LITERARY MAN  
OR  
*DOES WRITING PAY?*

By PERCY FITZGERALD



*IN TWO VOLUMES*  
VOL. II.



London  
CHATTO AND WINDUS, PICCADILLY  
1882

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# RECREATIONS OF A LITERARY MAN.

## CHAPTER XI.


### COUNTRY-HOUSE LIFE.

FOR the *real* "working man"—the overtaxed being who slaves all the year round with brain and will and wits, and whose fingers ceaselessly go over the measured distance—the country-house visit is the true Convalescent's Home. But for one with a keen sense of enjoyment, there is nothing more inspiring than when cares have been shuffled off temporarily—say for a week—when the cab waits below, and word is brought up that everything is "on," the last cloak, bag, gun, is "in," and you go gaily down, step in as gaily, and give the word

cheerily, "Charing Cross!" or "Great Northern!" You are starting for a country-house. You are going home from school—a rather big schoolboy; but somehow it brings back that notion.


There is no sensation more agreeable than, after a pleasant travel of an hour, to find the train slackening speed as it draws up, say at Staghurst, the Nupton station, on a soft and charming afternoon. Everything is very green and pastoral about Staghurst—the hamlet, smoke curling, and the rest; and I, the only passenger alighting, see Nupton's light open waggonette and pair, and Nupton's coachman waiting in a pastoral dreamy way. I call him Nupton, but every one knows some such hospitable friend. All seems innocence and tranquillity, even to the porter who takes the portmanteau, lying abandoned far up on the platform, and puts it with deep respect into the Nupton waggonette.

An establishment of the class of Nupton has great charms, conducted in the palace and great-house style, and yet with a friendly and hospitable and even unceremonious fashion. A fine house or




semi-castle, newly built and decorated, five or six riding-horses, three or four carriages, luxurious shooting, fishing, and hunting, two billiard-tables, and *a groom of the chambers*—this is the way they do things at Nupton. It may be that he is out-running his income (a more rustic class talk of “outrunning the constable”); but that does not concern us his guests, who at such houses are the most hollow of worldlings; as, indeed, is Nupton himself, and his wife, who merrily “order” guests to fill their house at the correct festival time, as they order tradesmen to send them down buhl cabinets and mirrors. But while it lasts, it is, and will be, very delightful; for it is like going to a theatre, or passing into some false existence for a term: everything being conceived in this spirit and mapped out by Nupton for this short period of magnificence—extra servants, state liveries, and the *great* cook, who wrote the “English Cuisinier,” and who has been chartered for ten days only; after which the lamps will be put out, and everybody dismissed.

It is very pleasant the driving up through the



fine demesne and park spreading out charmingly, and giving a *nobleman-like* air, and gazing on the wood and water and deer and ancestral oaks and elms. The connection of Nupton's ancestors, by the way, is by no means assured, for it is well known that it was his father's money—— However, this is ungracious.

Again, the look of the house, which has a tranquil populated air—lights twinkling up and down : for it is dressing-time at places like Nupton. A discreet man will always arrive just at dressing-time ; the foolish man will take care to come between two and three. With what result ? What might have been a whet becomes a drug. He is cast upon the hostess ; for he knows no one. Every one is away shooting or riding ; a balance of ladies is left ; and before the end of those weary hours the bloom is off the rye—he is stale and stupid. Compare the discreet man, who comes dashing up just as the dinner-gong is sounding. “Dear me ! afraid I am so late.” “Jest in time, sir,” the solemn groom of the chambers says ; “gong only jest rung.” The discreet man is into



his finery in a moment, and comes down into the crowded room—the *new guest*! There is a gentle curiosity—he is a mild sensation—a novelty. At dinner he is a sort of tonic, for he *has the latest* town news; and if he be *very* discreet, he will have come furnished with some little report, which *may or may not be true*. Faces look down from the ends of the table to the interesting stranger who is chattering volubly, relating his adventures. Nupton is pleased with his guest, who is thus doing him credit.

Breakfast at the state country-house is always a pleasant starting-point. Every one is fresh. Old Mr. Thompson, our member, over at the side-table cutting up grouse, tells how he has been over at the farm, on a walk. Young Dalton and the son of the house have been out riding. A pensive lady—"young lady" she claims to be called—was in the garden *gathering flowers*, "and saw Mr. Dalton and his friend ride out." *They* did not see her. General clatter and chatter. It is wonderful how people eat at these places. Through the din, Nupton, who himself enjoys nothing except his



state, is settling about the dogs. "I have told my head keeper to be in waiting after breakfast—so you can see him, Philips. I would recommend the new plantation, which has not had a gun fired into it since last year. However, that's all for yourselves." There is always some selfish campaigner in the party like Philips who has "knocked about" a good deal. "Then you will lend me your breech-loader, Nupton," says Philips coolly. "I can't shoot with the thing they gave me yesterday. I told your fellow he ought not to have such a piece—it's a discredit to the house."

This is a public rebuke to Nupton, whose muskets and gun-room keeper cost him a fortune. But Philips is "a cool hand."

Pleasant after breakfast the council on the terrace or steps, when cigars are lit, and the "fellows" are going back and forward to and from their rooms, getting ready. Then comes the gun-room and the keeper. There is always one of the type of Philips to take possession of the keeper and make him his own, or rather one whom the keeper accepts as the *can-ning* man, the

king of the party. No men have the power of contempt, or sarcasm even, *in their bearing*, to the degree keepers have. They have an undefined manner of respectful depreciation, exerted on certain members of the party, which has always been my admiration and envy. They pierce through the clumsy but elaborate disguises of straps, breech-loaders, pouches, etc., and expose incompetence in all its nakedness. With them an honest and avowed ignorance is the more respectable.


Nothing is more fresh or inspiring than this going forth of a fresh clear morning, with the ground crackling under foot and the air sharp and stimulating. The lines of the branches are edged with little films of frost, and the great fields and the plantations, and the little hills, and Nupton's own house and park, look charming; and we envy Nupton his acres and happiness, not suspecting that Nupton is at that moment in his study shut up with his agent, with a wistful, careworn face, plotting some scheme by which they shall raise money to meet the heavy interest now overdue.

We walk on, in our cheerful procession, a dozen strong, with the retainers bringing up the rear, and the keeper's two terriers, themselves wiry and frosty, and with coats that seem made of cocoa-nut fibre, and who enjoy the prospect of the day's sport as much as we do.


We go out through many swinging gates, through the farm at the back, leap across frozen brooks, and at last draw near to the mysterious plantation, which has been held sacred since last year. Nupton will tell us at dinner what the fattening of that cover cost him ; how something "got among the birds," and how he thought it better to get a whole lot from Lord Sowberry's keeper. He had to pay men at night to watch. "Altogether, I suppose," says Nupton at dinner, who has a habit of swinging his censer in his own face, "every bird you shot to-day has cost me about a sovereign apiece."

At this little gate of the plantation we halt mysteriously, like a storming party, which indeed we are, and scarcely whisper, while our chief posts us. Two or three go round to the right and left

while we wait at the gate. Then the signal is given, and we all enter together in a long line. The unhappy birds, hitherto nursed in the lap of luxury, and actually feeding on some of the courses that Nupton has provided for them—at lunch it may be, or at a late breakfast—little dream of the murderers who are stealing on them. Already a flutter and flapping, with a kind of screech—a fatal “bang” far away to the right, and Philips has drawn first blood, and is reloading. We wait for him, and then move on ; henceforward it is all flap, whirr, start, and bang. At every pace some fine heavy creature rises slowly ; nay, we can see him walking, strutting among the bushes, alarmed and suspicious, yet afraid to rise. It does indeed seem murderous, when the rich black creature comes heavily down, and plunges and flaps on the ground, while the fine glittering black eye rolls red, burning reproach at its slayer. It is marvellous what risks, as we move forward in skirmishing order, are invisible to each other. There are some fledglings among us—human I mean—whose every motion with their firearms




appals. The sound of the shot rattling, too, near among the trees and branches a little in front speaks of an escape rather too imminent ; but instead of gratitude and thankfulness, there is angry and heated expostulation. One of these raw hands kills some wretched bird scarcely a perch from him, and the unholy slayer becomes jubilant and excited, blazing away to this side and that, regardless of human life. An hour past noon ; the sun shines out, and we halt at some farmhouse for lunch. The sandwiches come out, the flask. At most great houses—at Nupton's of course—this is all done *en grande*, and there are special menials sent on with heavy baskets containing knives and forks, table-linen, bottles, and all the *appareil* of a formal lunch. Far better, and more unconstrained, the little paper packet of sandwiches and the flask, aided by the hospitality of the farmhouse, home-brewed beer and the like—service to be more than handsomely requited by the offering of a hare,—a luxury to be enjoyed on the coming Sunday without guilty terror. Once—but this was not at Nupton—a scene not a little



dramatic took place on the occasion of one of these noontide refectations.

We return home to dress for dinner. Hark to the gong or bell. Nupton generously allows a little "law" to people of rank. We troop down "the grand stair;" the numerous "bachelors," treated in an ostentatiously pariah fashion, which does not in the least take off the sense of affront, descending *their* meaner staircase, which leads up to regions originally, I firmly believe, intended for menials. We assemble gradually: our host enters last, and, with an anxious air, portions out his males and females. This causes him some quarter of an hour's thought in his study. "It's so hard to get variety," he says. "And the women get out of temper, you know, if you don't give 'em the right men. I only wonder how people can behave so to people under whose very roof they are, and who are slaving themselves to feast them." Nupton always has his servants drawn up in his hall—to create an air; pressing in coachmen, ostlers, etc., to make a show. Instead of crossing the hall, too, some of these creatures wave us on through



a room which has unfortunately two doors ; and thus we are obliged "to stream" through a suite of rooms, which is grander and more in the ducal style.

These banquets are welcome ; there is always plenty of light and flowers, and the table makes a handsome show. Everybody looks fresh and healthy, and better for their day's exercise ; there is a great chatter, and rather boyish spirits. Nupton's own face, looking neither fresh nor healthy, is the only drawback. He is always trying to peer round the epergne, wistfully straining to get a view of some one down at the end. No one ever knows what he wants or wishes to see ; but he is thus busy all during the banquet. When the ladies are gone, the gentlemen do not talk very much to Nupton ; and, I am sorry to see, fall into that rather painful habit of talking to each other, apparently unconscious of their host—something of which is always owing to the host himself, and some little weakness in his character. But it *is* certainly painful to see a host struggling, beating up hard against the sense of being a cipher, with

a natural determination to force himself into notice—a proceeding, from the necessarily obtrusive manner of it, resented as an impertinence.

Of a mild winter's day, about Christmas time, when the darkness is drawing on, towards five o'clock, there seems something melancholy in the look of the spreading demesne ; the great trees, with their drooping branches spreading wide ; the rolling sward, the stillness, and the air of tranquil solitude. Far off in the distance twinkle lights in the shadowy castle. To a person walking without encountering a soul, all this offers a curious contrast. Perhaps, too, the sense of having to return to the busy "hum of men," from what seems so peaceful and happy. I am never weary of this pleasing sense, and that walk or wandering in the darkening twilight.

In the ceremonial on the morning of the departure, having been up betimes, to catch the early train, there is something specially dismal. Farewell has been taken on the night before, and there is here now the solitary breakfast and the carriage waiting. Sweeping down the great avenue,



the grass, and the great trees, and the bit of water crossed by the bridge, all look soft, charming, and inviting in the morning sun.

A country house, on a great scale, filled, say at Christmas, with a band of pleasant people, sometimes supplies the memory with pictures and dreams, not "laid in fading colours." With such, many of us will have associations truly delightful, when we have found, almost by accident, what has influenced our whole life. Sometimes the festivities, the plays, theatricals, the rural element at Christmas, the bright lights, the ball, the one charming face long remembered, fall into glittering scenes; while, with the morning of departure for the railway station, lives a dull recollection, as though the lights had been put out, and we were going back to school. How many romances have dated from some such gathering!

## CHAPTER XII.

### ART IN THE STREETS.

THERE is an often quoted story in the "Evenings at Home," entitled "Eyes and No Eyes," which has been perhaps more profitable to the thoughtful than all the official lectures in the world. The principle involved is that there is about us in our sphere a vast amount of what is entertaining and worthy of observation, which, through carelessness or ignorance, is overlooked. The little apologue was applied to objects in the country; but the lover of art and its principles can find much that will suggest reflection and study as he hurries along London streets. I confess the entertainment is inexhaustible and varied. You can criticize every new and old building, and gradually educate yourself; note prospects that are effective;

find out faults and beauties, pretty vistas, and the rest. The City is an endless source of delight, and can be explored like a foreign town; there are such quaint old houses and bits of antiquity, while even the modern blocks have an almost Venetian stateliness. There are favourite streets and corners which never tire, and have almost a kind of romance. A strange sensation is produced by going into the City of a Sunday, say towards Christmas time, when it seems peculiarly solitary. There is one street—Thames Street—busy enough of week days, blocked with wains, and crowded with trains of men carrying boxes of oranges on their heads up the steep alleys that descend into it. A highly picturesque old street, with quays and warehouses, and the old churches, and the bridge which crosses it. But enter it of a winter's Sunday, about five o'clock, the effect is almost solemn from the preternatural stillness. A street of the dead! Not a sound is heard, for the depth of the interposing blocks of houses shuts off all sound. Not a soul is met. On you walk, listening to your own footsteps. The lamps are


lit, and the effect is exactly as though it were the middle of the night and every one was sleeping, and you a solitary traveller, just landed and walking up from the Docks. A more curious deception could not be imagined. Presently you emerge at the end, and hear the clatter of cabs and omnibuses, the sound of voices—and it is day again.

If I walk down Pall Mall, I can find entertainment by some such criticism as this on the club-houses and other buildings. These, I say to myself, are most successful, because their exterior is honestly expressive. The architect knows he must find two vast chambers, each well lit, and looking upon the street; each as lofty as possible, being intended for the reception of a large number of persons. He is therefore perforce obliged to throw his building into the shape of two great tiers, which are so marked and *exigeant* that they make their presence felt outside. Thus it is that we always can know that such a building is a club. The Carlton is singularly meretricious in its tone and decoration ;

nothing can be more inartistic than the contrast of its yellow colour with the bricky hue of the Aberdeen granite pillars. In these, too, an artistic law is violated, the granite columns being cut in short lengths. It is the strength and point of a column that it should be in one piece, and the result here is a rickety, insecure air. Every year the lines of joining grow blacker. The Reform Club is an admirable building, and will bear study, though it has the defect of being a copy. The air of solidity, of harmony, and completeness is most striking. This will be found to arise from the perfect proportion observed in the relation of the openings for windows to the surface in which those openings are made. This is a matter rarely thought of either in houses or churches, yet it is at the bottom of many failures. A window is for the purpose of admitting light, but it should not be converted into a vast door, as it so often is, stretching from the top to the bottom of the room. Windows naturally weaken the façade unless they are strictly after the fashion of what might be popularly called "a hole in the wall," and

should not amount to leaving the front of the house almost an open space, divided only by strips of masonry or brickwork. The fashion of running windows down to the floor gives an air of insecurity, for there should be something to lean the elbows on as we look out. When they do go to the floor the place of the parapet is supplied by the Venetian balcony of stone. The iron make-shift balconies, so common with us, do not go beyond ornament, as they are too frail and open to walk on, and too uncomfortable to lean on. In the Reform Club the proportions are beautiful, the wall in which the windows are pierced being the main object and still a wall—not as in modern houses, where the amount of window space equals the amount of wall space. We are now at Charing Cross. What an improvement to the Square itself if the parapet running along the street in front of the Gallery were removed, and a flight of steps led down straight into the Square!


These criticisms are not very deep, but they are suggestive, and the habit of making such might lead to something more profound.



It is often, and indeed periodically, announced that some old "bit," whose existence was unnoticed or unknown, is to "come down." These executions of late years are recurring with unseemly rapidity. Some of the survivals even now are a surprise—such as three or four old inns in the Borough, with the galleries running round. It is something to have seen the Tabard ; but the most picturesque was the Warwick Arms, at Paternoster Row, destroyed half a dozen years ago. I shall never forget the welcome delight and surprise of a special visit to Leadenhall Street, to see a doomed mansion to which worthy antiquaries had called attention in the papers. It was an opulent merchant's house, some two centuries old, and was truly instructive, as calling up a picture of the social life of the day. You entered from the street under a sort of arch, and found yourself in a courtyard ; the merchant's offices and warehouse being in the street, his dwelling-house towards the back of the court. It was a lesson in architecture to note the air of spaciousness as you ascended the oaken stair and

found yourself in the nobly proportioned room, painted all round in fresco, the colours grimed and faded. The week following, the workmen began to level it.

There is one mode of education in art open to the sojourner in London, which is of the most agreeable, pleasant, and easy kind; and that is a regular attendance at "Christie's." During the season, a constant succession of great sales is announced, the collection of personages who may have devoted a life, or it may be a fortune, to their pursuit. Each, therefore, is an exhibition of the best and most costly kind. There you can see for yourself the choice bits of Sèvres and Old Bow; can compare and note — pity perhaps — and wonder how people can devote their lives and purses to such things. So with the great collections of pictures sold during the last ten years, when the dowagers of fashion and their daughters poured in in crowds, as to some flower show or fancy fair. It was really an opportunity for seeing some of those more famous pictures often alluded to in books, but






kept down in the country. Some of the crazes of this time will be remembered; and it was a sight to see some poor dupe, with an anxious face, contending with a dealer, before the packed room, to secure a conspicuous bit, say, of Bristol, and which, with a fluttering triumph, he was allowed to do, while "a round of applause" from the crowd rewarded him. He probably has the bit of Bristol now, or has parted with it for a song. The mania for that ware has completely passed away.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### DAY-DREAMS—HOLIDAY PORTS.

IT is always valuable, in this view of "contemplative recreation," to keep stored up pleasant scenes and pictures. As the distance lengthens, they grow brighter and more interesting. They are often of the most trifling kind. It is the associations that give the charm. One can have whole galleries of these pictures, which are ever welcome and delightful ; but there are some truly painful, and yet of a sad interest. There are scenes and tours, nights and days, which have a sort of fascination. There are old school-days, midnight journeys. To take a few specimens out of a hundred, Dover and Calais, and indeed ports generally, have always this mysterious charm



attached. Places of this kind, seen under hurried circumstances—new, unknown—in the pauses of a hurried journey, gain a theatrical romantic air. They seem called into being specially for us and our travels; the flaring lights, the screaming trains, the up-all-night hotels, the stormy waters, the packets moaning at their berths—these are made specially for our brief transit. Yet, as we know, this is nothing but part of a prosaic daily routine, and such places have a regular life of their own, apart from the functions. This is but a hint, which many can expand for themselves.

Connected with this view, how many little cheap pleasures are there which, without trouble, fuss, or expense, supply infinitely more enjoyment than the elaborate, official, and costly and troublesome. Say that, as I live close to Victoria Station, on one Saturday I shall go down and see a few hours' change of life and scene, without preparation or trouble—go for a night to Calais. The journey down this line, in these holiday times, has a strange flavour and interest. The beautiful country; the hop-gardens, where the workers look


up lazily as the train flies by old towns like Canterbury; the glimpse of the Cathedral; the opulent-looking people standing at the rural stations and waiting to get in—all this is interesting and often recalled afterwards.

Add a summer's day; a journey down at noon; and the fresh inspiring air from the vast expanse of blue spreading round, as one toiled up to the castle; while below were seen the ships and steamers lying placidly and lazily like insects.

In all the little obscure landing-places and sally-ports called packet-stations, there is always a sort of attraction and even romance. Mean and meagre as are their surroundings, there is a dignity and grandeur about them; for they are at the edge of the vast and indistinct highway which leads off into the far distance, or more often into the dark and dangerous night. I always feel this in the case of the tiny fence, the little wall that stretches awkwardly into the sea, the old-fashioned town nestling behind, and which for so many years has maintained a gallant struggle with the boisterous enemy outside. Such little shelters,

too, have a storm-beaten, buffeted air, a weary air of vigilance.

There is something very interesting in the approach to an unfamiliar port, something that awes as well as interests. The little pier that runs out so irregularly, strengthened with all kinds of makeshifts; the squat lighthouse at the end, whitewashed or of some copper-coloured stone; the strange vessels lying alongside; the curious-looking houses seen through the cordage; and the people waiting on the pier—all this never palls. Far more dramatic, however, is the spectacle when, towards midnight, the lighthouse, a speck in the distance, grows fuller and brighter, draws nearer and nearer, as do the twinkling lights of the little town behind, until at last we come up close. And as we go tumbling and foaming by, it blazes out upon us with a huge and dazzling brilliance like a vast policeman's bull's-eye turned upon us suddenly. Then black shadowy figures are seen moving on the pier—their shouts seem friendly; and if the night has been stormy, a preternatural smoothness and bliss-



ful gliding gives comfort to some wretched beings who have been agonizing below.


Of all places in the kingdom for exciting these emotions, perhaps Dover is the most potent. There the old town crouches and nestles under the huge chalk hill like one of the ancient watchmen of a stormy night. It has a weather-beaten air, with suggestions of smuggling; little low houses; while the narrow streets look as though they had been pathways developed. It is curious too that for centuries it has been the old place of landing and departing. What countless throngs of exiles, travellers, kings, queens, have come and gone! How many couriers on matters of life and death, or on some political errand, have come rattling down the hill in the chaise-and-four, with an uneasy look at the sea below, and have chartered the small smack or sloop to take them across! What lords and ladies on the grand tour, travelling in their own carriages; and in war-time, what dramatic work of spies ferried across in an open boat pulled by six strong men! What officers with despatches from Lord Wellington, and

other generals, all entering or passing out through the quiet, old-fashioned sally-port ! Then the half-French flavour, the French money, the stray Frenchmen, commissioners, or what not ; the French vessels lying at the pier—the Parade or Terrace, with its green doors, shutters, and bow-windows, offering a pleasant old-fashioned air.

The most unpleasant idea of the place might have been gathered years ago, before the present trim and convenient mail arrangements were in being. The traveller bound for Ostend at the close of the autumn comes down by the train, and after a chilly journey, as the tickets are being taken outside the town, he hears the cavernous roarings of the dark monster waiting beyond. As he, with his fellows, turns out into the street, he sees the lights twinkling in the little amphitheatre below, and is assailed with short but keen gusts that sweep up from the sea ; robbed, however, of half their vigour by the interposing shelter of the cliffs. And then began that cheerless procession to the water's edge of dark-robed figures, their heads bent down, their luggage


attending, and all, it may be sworn, with sinking hearts. Lights flash out everywhere: from the open doors of the minor inns, which are expecting arrivals from the sea; from the lighthouse close by; from the old Ship Inn, which had an inexpressibly snug and substantial air, and seemed to lay its very front to the beach, contemptuous of winds and waves. Then came the mournful piping of the steam, the cheerless pier, the lanterns with their sickly glare, held by tarpaulined men, the slippery gangway, and the mean little craft with the white funnels, and that looked about as dirty as a collier. Once clear of the little pier, inside of which there is a deceptive smoothness, comes the first ferocious lurch, like an ill-tempered horse launching out his hind legs; the sudden swish, as the first sea swoops aboard; and the five or six hours' agony sets in.

Nowadays the preparations are a good deal *adoucis*. There is something stately in the progress of the mails and mail passengers. There is the fine Admiralty Pier, the rails running down to the sea, and ever thronged with sight seers.





Dover always has seemed to me to be the door or lodge-gate through which people enter Old England. The name itself works as a charm to call up the flurry of embarking, the headlong express, and that awful monster, the tumbling and rolling sea at its feet, waiting for its morning and nightly victims. To quiet people at a distance, sojourners in the country or in cathedral towns, a journey abroad is a great, not to say solemn act. The preparations are anxiously made. In such minds Dover fills out with awful and majestic proportions. To the foreigner arriving, there is something impressive and imposing in the lofty amphitheatre, crested by the old castle, the curved strand, the rows of terraces, and the air of solidity, which distinguishes it from places it so resembles on the Mediterranean. To the flying traveller it has an interesting, if not poetical air, chiefly owing to that sense of being up all night; that blear-eyed, strained look; lamps ever burning; the mysterious and generally angry sea tumbling against the Admiralty Pier; while the shrieking express rumbles down through the streets, or emerges



from the Shakespeare Cliff, to consign its burden to the sea, or returns with a more welcome freight, bearing the much-relieved passengers into the heart of the land. Then there is the great Lord Warden Hotel, ever wakeful and on the watch, reared at the very edge, looking out solemnly towards France—a great weather-beaten fortress, whose walls are charged with blessings and signals of welcome relief. Many have been the exhausted beings that have tottered up to its blessed portal, all spent and dripping, their aching muscles so frayed and torn with the labours of the sea, that but a little more and death, as they fancied, must have come: singers, actresses, ladies of quality, princesses, queens, all reduced to the common thread-paper level, led in by friendly menials well accustomed to the duty. The delicious repose of the sitting-room, or the welcome elysium of bed, though we hear the enemy still growling and tumbling below under the very windows, boisterously lashing the walls to get at us! But in the small hours of the morning, three or four a.m., when up in London the last waltz is being played,

how yet more welcome the cheerful and welcome blaze in the bright illuminated hall, and the fresh unblinking attendants ! Paradise, surely ! But to-day, in this bright sun, it seems a festive snowy-white pile ; Italian-like waiters gazing out pensively at the cobalt blue sea.

The town itself irregular and straggling ; the ancient streets, carved and scooped out of the hill-side ; the green-verandahed terraces that sweep round the shore—nothing can be more dully and shabbily regular than these crescents and rows of a “damp gamboge tint,” as Lamb calls it, which, with the verdigris-green of the shutters, gives but a sad combination. But to-day all is gay and bright, and the streets behind, that meander directly from what the French would call “the port,” are piquant enough. Snargate Street, straggling all along, has an originality, especially where the breaks and openings reveal steamers, and cordage, and dock-work, in the closest proximity. The shops, too, seem primitive, and have an air of their own. The name, too, is quaint, while overhead barracks, huge gateways,


inlets to tunnels, stray cannon beetle alarmingly, ready like dogs to bark and bite. The population, always sauntering carelessly along the centre of the street, seems made up of soldiers, sailors, and garrison belles.

But as we draw near to the piers, there are some little winding alleys and turns, where you could play hide-and-seek ; so antique and odd, too, that they suggest something of the cathedral close idea, and we expect to see a minor canon fluttering round the corner. Close by here, too, the Chat-ham and Dover has thrust itself in, to the inconvenience of the town, wishing to push into a good place near the water's edge, while it sends out its curved feelers down to the pier. The other, the South Eastern, has forced itself in to the right.

If one wants to be thoroughly depressed, repair slowly down to the end of the parade. Under shelter of the castle we find a little plot of pleasure, known as "The Gardens." The band plays here periodically, and the Dover natives assemble for promenade. On this attenuated little strip, carefully railed in so as to be made select, the garrison

young ladies walk up and down with gentlemen of the garrison.

High up towards the hill, there is a rare old church that seems to be built of flints ; and going more inland, we come upon a sort of new quarter of villas and suburban residences, which bears the pretty name of *Maison Dieu*. Indeed, an agreeable day might be spent at Dover by an observant person, made up of a number of not very important sights and incidents, but sufficient to interest. The traveller can wander hither and thither, climb the downs, look towards Folkestone, gaze at the ever-interesting chalk cliffs, wander by the shore ; but always will find his restless fancies fluttering to the port, to the great and not by any means silent highway that spreads towards France, and to which all things more or less tend. The whole exists for that—town and all seems but a threshold. The lulls of repose are but intervals, and by day and night impartially the solemn rumbling and shrieks and clatter tell that something is arriving from the ocean, or hurrying down to it. But, indeed, the whole day was full of slight,



trivial perhaps, but not unentertaining events. It was what is called good value, and might be contrasted with the other course of rushing down impetuously in the dark, by night express.

The town has its assembly-room or concert hall, ever and everywhere having the same dreary physiognomy. There is always an unhappy showman, magician, concert-giver, or spouter, who arrives possibly with cheerfulness, naturally building on the crowd of strangers and visitors he sees upon the beach. He takes the rooms, and issues his bills: "Merry-Making Moments—Spanker's Wallet of Varieties," with portrait of Spanker opening the wallet with an expression of delight or surprise. Such a being was in possession on the evening of my day at Dover, a reciter, and this was his Grand Competition Night, when a magnificent goblet was competed for. This I had seen in the window of a mart, a blue ribbon reposing across it. If a tumbler of the precious metal—it was scarcely bigger—could be called magnificent, it deserved the title. The poor operator was speaking as I entered, in unmistak-

able Scotch, the history of Little Breeches, and was giving it with due pathos. The competition began. There were four candidates. This was certainly the most diverting portion of the entertainment, from its genuineness, the eagerness of the competitors, and their ill-disguised jealousy. A doctor-looking man with a beard, who had the air either of reading familiar prayers to his household with good parsonic effect, or of having tried the stage, uttered his lines with a very superior air, as though the issue were not in doubt. But when a shabby man, who looked as if he had once practised tailoring, stepped on the platform, there was an injudicious show of welcome. He was smug and confident, at once revealed himself as the local poet, and, encouraged by the applause announced humbly that he would proceed to recite some lines he wrote "on the great storm which committed such 'avoc on our pier." There were local descriptions, and local names, which seemed to touch the true chord; notably, an allusion to a virtuous magnate then, I believe, gone to his rest:


“ For his good deeds, I must  
Make it known,  
He founded that refuge  
Of the Sailors’ ’Ome.”

When the votes came to be taken, this poet received the cup. His joy and mantling smiles I shall not forget, though the donor gave it to him with unconcealed disgust ; for it showed to what universal suffrage leads. The doctor and the other defeated candidates, who had been asked to retire to a private room during the process of decision, were now obliged to emerge in mortified procession, there being no other mode of egress. The doctor’s face was a study. The second part was to follow. But it was now growing late, and time and mail-packets wait for no man.

During the competition night has let down its curtain. The air is fresh and welcome, though, it does not, of course, beat on a fevered brow. The Snargate Street houses just interpose screen-like between us and the sea. There was a busy hum and chatter in the streets, which were filled with soldiers and sailors, and clattering sojourners. Now are all the lamps ablaze. The sea is un-




ruffled, and there is hardly a breath stirring ; and the great chalk cliffs gleam out in a ghostly fashion, like mammoth wave-crests. As it draws on to ten o'clock the path to the Admiralty Pier begins to grow dark ; flitting figures hurry down past the fortress. Like the Lord Warden, now all ablaze and getting ready its hospice for the night, the town shows itself an amphitheatre of dotted lights, while down below white vapours issue walrus-like from the sonorous funnels of the steamer. Now faint screams, far off from inland behind the cliffs, give token that the trains, which have been tearing headlong down from town since half-past eight, are nearing us. More crowds of shadowy figures are trooping down to the sea ; while the railway-gates closed, and porters watching with green lamps, show that the travellers are due. It is really impressive to wait at the closed gate of the pier and watch these two outward-bound trains arrive. Suddenly comes a shriek, prolonged and sustained, and the great expresses from Victoria and Ludgate, which met on the way and became one, come thundering down. Compart-




ment after compartment of first-class carriages flits by, each lit up so as to show the crowded passengers, with their rugs and bundles dispersed about them. Illuminated cell after cell flashes on, and it gives an air of grandeur to think that the solitary pier, jutting out into the waves, should all of a sudden be thus honoured with grand company, and flashing lights, and saloon-like splendour. For what a motley rush has for that brief snatch favoured the lonely spot! Ambassadors, it may be, generals for the seat of war, great merchants, singers or actors, princes, dukes, millionaires, orators, writers, "beauties"—all may be ranged side by side or *vis-à-vis* in those cells. That face under the old-fashioned travelling-cap may be that of a prime minister, and that other gentlemanly person a swindling bank director, flying with the spoil in his pocket.

The next instant the long stone causeway is alive with a vast crowd. The illuminated label points with a fiery glare "To Calais Boat," while lower down a similar one directs "To Ostend Boat." These two vessels are lying far down




below, to be descended to by ladders alarmingly steep; their ghastly white chimneys blowing and snorting sonorously, and raking back, as a fiery horse puts back his ears when meaning mischief. Flaring lanterns, laid on the ground, barely reveal the quivering monster below. Sometimes, indeed, a door in the pier-walls is opened, and shows us the Calais boat bobbing on the outside of the pier, eager to bound into the ocean; but this is on tranquil summer nights.

But hark now to yet another distant and prolonged scream—this time from beyond Shakespeare's Cliff, through which the South Eastern is pierced. A flare of light, a scattering of sparks, and the Charing Cross train arrives. More ringing of bells, and we set off. The charm of the dusk and a calm tranquil night is indescribable. The fierce glare of the French lighthouse drawing near; and at midnight, the gliding in between the piers, the twinkling lights of the town, the cordage, and the fishing-boats clustered together and seen against the calm sky—all this, in its small unpretending way, made up a perfect scene. Walking



ashore and up the lonely pier—all the rest are to go on through the long night—I see the old fortifications, drawbridges, towers, etc., and that illuminated clock over the railway station, to the left, glaring with its fierce sleepless eye—as well it may, for it has no rest—with trains coming down and setting off. I passed under Hogarth's old gate, into the open place where the old town and its elegant town-hall stood, whence jangled out softly and musically the chimes. How shadowy were the outlines of the watch-tower close by! Not a soul was to be seen, not a sound heard; all the bustle of arrival was just *outside* the gate. I was *in* the town. Down a little street, off the Place, I sought Dessein's Hotel, and rang out his bell. Next morning was Sunday, and there was the cathedral, with the fishwomen, their gold earrings and frilled caps and red petticoats—another scene or picture. The old museum, lately the genuine Dessein's Hotel, where Sterne and Scott lodged. Here Brummell's house—a quaint, interesting, tiny place. By mid-day I returned, and was home again. Yet those few hours were a pleasant contribution to life.

I have other recollections connected with these ports. I recall another holiday time, also in the fair summer—a night spent in passing from Belfast Lough to Fleetwood, bound for “foreign parts,” full of hope and spirit and anticipated enjoyment. The journey was almost yacht-like. It was five o'clock when, coming on deck, I saw the harbour. Never shall I forget that delicious morning, with the sea spread round of a Mediterranean blue, glistening and glittering; the sky the same, the sun already shining with a noon-day heat that was almost oppressive. The water, smooth as glass, glistened like silver; hardly a breath was abroad as we came gliding up to this unfamiliar port, which seemed deserted and unfinished. A few houses crested the hill overhead, some three or four employés waiting, and a modest little train of some three carriages waiting to convey away our slender complement of about a dozen voyagers. There was, however, no snorting engine with steam up, or guard, watch in hand, impatient to be away. The engine was snug in its shed, dozing perhaps: there were some hours



to wait before us. We went ashore, some of us, as to some newly discovered country. It had been a watering-place projected by the lord of the soil or sand, which had turned out unfortunately ; a terrace or two, a few little red-brick workmen's streets, all stopped short in the middle, as it were, of a bare field. We wandered about—not a soul was stirring. I could look into the parlour-windows, and raise them too, and see the tea-table of the night before and the " things " undisturbed. Not a soul was to be seen : there was something ghostly about the place. The most forlorn of all, however, was the pretentious crescent, meant originally to comprise an ambitious hotel, which had failed disastrously, and now seemed to be converted into a barrack. Thus exploring, thus wandering on this delicious morning, more than an hour went by, when we turned back to the pier and began to think of breakfast. Exactly opposite was an old-fashioned inn known as the Crown, with a hospitable-looking waiter at the door. The *habitues* to whom the route was familiar passed across at once ; the others entered in a more

doubtful and experimental fashion. The surprise within was of a most welcome kind : a long table from end to end of a room already lined with hungry passengers. This was the "packet breakfast," with every substantial delicacy that could be conceived.

After many flights between capitals, and the hurried ten minutes "allowed for refreshment" at Chester and other places, that bright Italian morning, the agreeable voyage, and the tranquil explorations—to say nothing of the enjoyed breakfast at the Crown—come back pleasantly on the memory.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### DAY-DREAMS—SOME OLD SUNDAYS.

THUS much for journeyings by sea and land. But through that gauzy curtain which hangs between us and our childish days, and which gives to them the misty charm that the same material does to *tableaux vivants*, I can look back and make out a few Sundays more distinct than other Sundays, generally dull and sober days.

There has been a voyage of some three or four days and nights in a lumbering steamer of the older build—of the pre-Scott-Russell era—during which, discomfort and physical agonies of all sorts have been my childish portion ; for there has been rough weather, and the ancient craft has been heaving up and down ; and the boyish mind which relished this motion a good deal on deck, as more or less partaking of “ fun,” hears the bell for dinner,




and rushes down to enjoy the luxuries of that meal, set out at the public cost, all of which may be partaken of unchecked by maternal restraint—maternal restraint at that moment being miserable in the ladies' cabin with every other lady. The swinging of the soup-tureen was yet more "fun," but not that sudden sting that seemed to shoot through the boyish frame—that sharp megrim in the head, precursor of ignominious rout, of the wild rush for the door, the temporary relief in the fresh air, and the final striking down and more sustained agonies that went on day and night on the little shelf that was called berth, until a steward was heard betimes saying that "we were coming in," and that it was Sunday morning! There was a soft gliding motion in the old craft that told of smooth waters; there was the pattering of heels and flopping of ropes sounding overhead; presently a stoppage, then a going on, and at last wearily, and with a head that seemed as if it were a churn, with a dozen dairy-maids churning hard and fast—the boy, that is now a man, crawled up the brass-bound stair, and saw that "we were in."

Sunday morning, indeed—sunny, bright, blue, glittering ; no longer the weary sea all round, with its heart-sickening monotony, but a great port crowded with shipping, threads and shrouds on all sides, gay snowy-white and yellow houses rising all round, busy yellow quays, crowded yellow quays, quays mixed up with a blue sea, blue sea mixed up with quays, and on the quays men all in cheerful cobalt-blue frocks and scarlet night-caps, and women with coloured petticoats and no bonnets, but in caps, and with a great deal of gold, and rather copper-coloured. It was bewildering, and, with dairymaids still churning hard, I note, with a boy's special curiosity and even interest, *in spite* of the churn, that there is a huge wheel turning on the quay, which is somehow lifting a great block of stone, and, what is more wonderful, it is turned treadmill-fashion by more men in easy blue frocks, crawling on the wheel, which at that moment appeared to me to be a most delightful mechanical operation. At this moment I have the whole of this scene like a picture before me, and recall my placid wonder at this being Sunday

morning, and such operations going on, when, in spite of the dashing of the churn, I hear some one say again that this is France, and that this gay Sunday morning scene is Havre. Then we go ashore, and look back at the heavy lumbering monster which has brought us, without pleasure or regret leave the port behind, and get down a narrow street where there are no pathways. And above this is a house that seems all mirrors, and golden clocks, and white shining doors, and gorgeous crimson-velvet chairs and sofas, on which we lie down and ease the churning head, and get much better in reply to the affectionate question : " How do you feel now, dear?" when breakfast sets in, with a long loaf of mysterious and wonderful bread made into a gymnastic club.

On this Sunday morning in the French town, much restored by the meal, we go forth. We come to a huge yellow cathedral, all yellow aisles and altars, and innumerable long candles, and wicker chairs enough to furnish fifty houses. And all this crowded to the door ; and most wonderful of all, here are a corps of soldiers clattering into the



aisle, making their guns rattle on the pavement, and, wonder of wonders, their band striking up with rich effect the popular "Sonnambula" air, "Vi ravviso." This was accepted with present delight.

Another Sunday, this time in England in raw winter. It is dawn. Here is the tall tower with the blazing clock-face which seems to hang in the air. The waters look dark and Stygian; the air is stiff and sharp, and with a suspicion of sleet. And presently, wheeling sharply to the right, we make for a dock where there are heavy red piers massive as rocks and gates to a giant's castle, and where there are flaring lamps and shadowy men that seem to drip through the fog. Then we are put ashore, and grope darkly among sheds, and huge casks, and monster carts half loaded or half unloaded; but all dark and not discernible till one is on them. For this is a Sunday morning, and the genii that load and unload are gone and have left their work half done. Drawbridges that rumble hollowly, chains that clank, patches of Styx again glistening below, and here are the great gates and the open road and the street.


What the hour was by this time, I did not know. It was strictly no concern of mine, as I was going on by one of the many trains that doubtless left every day, this being a great commercial place. But down by the dock gates, or near the dock gates, there were no cabs: which was strange, considering what a great commercial city this was. Howbeit, a strong porter went on before, and led the way past grim streets and tall chocolate-coloured warehouses, and smoking chimneys and great funereal yards that seemed filled with coal, and long viaducts of smutty-looking arches. But all this was quiet. By-and-by we got to the railway—the London and Grand Diagonal. And now for breakfast at a good hotel—ham, eggs, and “devils” generally—a repast that seems always to harmonize with the human system on coming out of a packet. Here was certainly the London and Grand Diagonal, but all its great gates were shut. It had an air of death—very odd for so great a commercial community. What did it mean? The porter down at the dock, who knew the truth, said he was “afeard” that the train had gone. “You

know—Sunday,” he said. A railway porter appeared. “Lord bless me! First train gone a quarter before—the mail up, you know. Sunday, you see. No train till ha’past ten to-night. One train o’ Sundays, you see. Mail up.” Here was a blow indeed: to wait till “ha’past ten” at night in *that* place—a great commercial place—of a Sunday, and I panting to get on. But it was Sunday, you know.

I went to the Grecian, but the Grecian was gone, or was become the Royal Alexandra, or some such name. Then on to another place not so good. Meanwhile the daylight was coming in slowly, but the streets remained empty. Wonderful in so great a commercial place.

The hotel I had selected was not full at this season. The attendance was of the limpest description. Gradually it became broad day, but at the slowest possible pace. Then was revealed the dismal coffee-room, with a discoloured gamboge paper, that looked glistening and sticky, and to which the corpses of many an indiscreet fly adhered. There were old red and decaying hang-

ings drooping down to the ground and charged with dust. The only objects of furniture to speak of, were two framed and glazed placards, and a sauce-bottle with a brick-red label. One of the placards was the Royal Liver Marine Insurance Company, Limited, with a list of directors and an almost piteous setting forth of the advantages that society had to offer. You might sit for so many hours of the day on barrels of gunpowder, it made no difference. You might embark for the tropics, and be a bishop on the Gold Coast. Then their bonus, and most tempting examples. Thus: A. had insured in the year '45 for a hundred pounds, aged 30. This was only '55, and see what that lucky dog A. was getting already, either a bonus—at his option—of two pounds seventeen and sixpence, or, if he elected to deny himself the bonus, one hundred and twenty pounds at his death. The prospect was set before one in so many appetizing ways that it seemed as if an insurer *must* come at last to long for his own death in order to reap such tempting advantages. The other placard was Messrs. Beales and Co.,



house-furnishing, etc., with pictures of the interior of their "vast warerooms," which seemed to be blocked up with every variety of bedstead, with a Louis Quatorze sort of foreman bowing and explaining matters to a lady and gentleman making purchases. Messrs. Beales mysteriously offered "special advantages to newly married couples" (what *could* they mean?) and to young house-keepers. There was the red label of the sauce-bottle too, which set forth that the sauce was "prepared from the recipe of a baronet in the country." I am minute about these matters, because they were the only literature in the room, and because through that long long, weary weary day when I was driven back upon the place from sheer monotony, some horrid and unaccountable fascination drew me over to study these placards and sauce-bottle. It was Sunday, and there were no daily papers. I came at last to know the placards by heart.

It dragged on slowly. I went out through the lonely town, went down to the river, where there was a lonely steamer setting off; thought I would



go in it, but reflected and came back. I went out again, and came back again. I thought it would never be done. It was a long Sunday, and the longest of Sundays. The strings of people went to church and came back. It began to grow dark, and the bedsteads and the "special advantages for young couples" faded out.

Then I went to the railway station. I found myself there towards nine, with the gas lit and the holiday people coming home. There were more bedsteads, and Messrs. Beales and their young married couples on a gigantic scale, suited to be seen from distant carriages. There was the long platform to walk up and down, and there were the cave-like coach-houses where the coaches were laid up and seemed to be snoozing. This whiled away an hour or so. It was drawing near to mail time. The mail bags were arriving, and it was amusing to watch what was done with them. The interior of the railway post-office, with its pigeon-holes and lamps, looked like the interior of a steamer's saloon or cabin, and the rueful alacrity of the employés suggested passen-


gers going on board. Being up all night, the tossing on the blue cushions, the breaking of day, the cold shiver as the door was opened, the general "creeping" feel as we would roll into town at six, this prospect was too much for me. I shrank from it, and went back to my room, a very mouldy apartment. As I entered a savoury smell greeted me. The landlord was having a friendly party of his friends; a noble piece of roast beef was being carried up. Alas! I and another were the only guests in the coffee-room. I believe he would have asked us to join this circle, on a hint that it would be acceptable, which it would have been. All that night we heard the pleasant revelry, singing, etc. A man less retiring would have made one of them.

But the Sunday came to a close at last, and I went away betimes on Monday morning, with the sun shining brightly, and in boisterous spirits.

## CHAPTER XV.

## DAY-DREAMS—OLD CHRISTMAS DAYS.

INDEED, as we grow older, it is no harm to keep a little fresh patch of grass or two green and well watered. As the eyes get strained and inflamed with the hot dusty vistas of a hard life, it becomes grateful and refreshing to turn back to some such little spot. People smile at any romance clinging to old school-days as a childish delusion ; but my own eyes turn with a pleasure and fondness even to my own school-days at Saxonhurst, where I lived six or seven years as a schoolboy proper, and whither I returned very often afterwards in the capacity of a schoolboy very much grown up. Our school had Elizabethan towers and wings, its old English gardens, Dutch ponds, dark walk of impenetrable yews, picture galleries, and




marble-paved oak-panelled dining-hall, where our scutcheon and device of a pale yellow filled in the mullioned windows. At this time it was wisely arranged that no one should go home : but instead, a grand theatrical season was arranged of, say, ten nights ; every one was allowed to receive a "Box," little or great, from his friends, stored with delicacies, and on which he might gorge : inducements so artfully captivating, that hardly a soul was anxious to consult the claims of affection, filial or otherwise, and go home. Finally, at this season, we, the grown-up schoolboys, who have left the place some five or six years—a special few who liked the place—received welcome notice that our company would be desired. Some of us were far away in the North of England, or farther still, in Scotland ; some of us in Ireland : but that made no difference, we liked each other and looked forward to a meeting with that pleasant and picturesque background—lights through the cheerful red curtain—flashing down the oaken floor or the corridor ; the merry and overpowering clatter of two hundred young voices of all ages

between eighteen and eight for music. Relish for such things, no doubt, seems childish enough, but I am speaking of myself now as I was then, and even as I write begin to find stealing back on me some of these very delightful feelings of the grown-up schoolboy.


Then, as a grown-up schoolboy, I could cheer myself with the thought of a second Christmas coming on the morrow, as it were waiting for me, at Saxonhurst. For the next evening I was away with the night, aboard the packet, crowded with men bound for pleasant country homes, and shooting and flirting parties. A long weary tossing night, yet full of pleasant dreams, and in the morning great Liverpool, with its huge river, all twinkling with lights, like pricked cardboard. Time, five o'clock ; scene, docks and dock-bridges ; a few dark figures, and a tall dark tower, with an illuminated dial hung in the air like a light-house lantern. Then up the little Water Street, which led down to wharves, through more docks, where great waggons are at work, early as it is, carting Christmas oranges and raisins. There was

a cold sharp air abroad, as we walked through many solitary streets, a man carrying a port-manteau; but it had a sort of interest and romance, for, you see, I was still a grown-up school-boy, and had a warm corner in my heart. It seemed strange walking up those great lonely streets, the hoarding ablaze with fiery posters proclaiming the competing glories of last night's pantomimes; the stray policeman; and here the lamp hanging out over the door of the hotel, old fashioned—the hotel sunk in the profoundest sleep. A resentful night-porter—a stirring of a surviving fire—a sitting there dozing and nodding till the hotel woke up, and the bright day set in.

It was a Sunday, and a Sunday of Christmas came in for reflected glories of the festival. A cheerful and enjoyable breakfast at the window—the crowds going by to church, gaily and gala-like; then the church itself, with the holly and flowers still fresh, and Christmas music still playing, gives this day a dreamy, delightful tone. Then on the road again, until dusk, when a sort of village comes gliding by, an "Old Curiosity



Shop" church, its aisle window, turned towards us like a shoulder, all lit up. Most familiar all this to the grown-up schoolboy; he knew that behind that old window were laid those casket-shaped tombs, with knights lying on them, which he had gazed on with a mysterious wonder. Beside it the old inn, the Somebody's Arms, a chaise-cart of a Saxonhurst quack, and in ten minutes we are scouring the roads, steep, downhill, round corners, across bridges, which lead to the old place. It was freezing, and the air sharp and keen. It was very strange for the grown-up schoolboy of that Christmas night, as he swept along, recognizing such familiar landmarks; when at last the gate swung open, and the smooth avenue was under the wheels, and umbrageous thick plantations began to shut out the sombre blue canopy of night, above which rose the huge dark block of building, under whose shadow we were driving, and which from side to side, from top to bottom, was dappled with lights, a genial inviting light seen through crimson curtains. In another moment, a great arched porch was over our heads,



and the driver was pulling at a rope which made a bell clang far off. It was curious to look round, and see, through the two quaint piers, the long straight avenue, on each side of which lay the two Dutch ponds a quarter of a mile long, and which were as white as bride-cakes—finest most inspiring fields of ice, up and down which the whole house had been flying all the day. Then the Gothic church to the left ; the great Elizabethan building to the right ; and now, as the arched doorway was opened and the noble old courtyard revealed, to catch the faint and distant hum of voices—I say all this sent a queer thrill through the grown-up schoolboy.

That old courtyard would have been worthy of an historical novel, with hexagonal towers at the corners, mullioned windows in abundance, and a noble flight of steps that went in tiers to the door of the baronial hall. Lights flashed along the windows, but all the long range to the left were draped in the traditionary illuminated crimson. Here was the old picture-gallery, and for that point the grown-up schoolboy made straight.



Long corridors, panelled walls, strange faces and figures passing and repassing, and looking at the stranger ; then the oak-floored lobby, a hum and chatter of voices, a door open and I see that long picture-gallery filling with crowds of figures, faces but dimly recognized in the light. There were visitors, fathers and uncles and guardians of the boys—a sort of universal gathering. Light and cheery were faces and voices ; and very welcome the air of innocent enjoyment over every face, with that heartiness and relish which comes by living among books and in the country. To the old schoolboy it seemed so strange and visionary as he walked up the room, a dim recognition seemed to come up—beaming eyes were turned towards him—dozens of hands were held out—cordial voices greeted—it was one genial chorus of “Ah ! how *are* you ?” (the stress laid upon the “are”), “*You* here !” What greetings, what delightful recognitions ! Then, as the crowd moved open, a figure would come out—some one who had travelled from afar off to welcome the grown-up schoolboy. Then what welcome ! “My dear old boy, I am

so glad ! See, our Jack is over there. What have you been doing with yourself ? ” These were now grown men, but whom we had parted from in the curtailed jacket of youth. A flood of questions, of friendly recollections, were poured out. Then there was a gradual motion to the door. The theatre was open ; it was nearly time for the curtain to rise, and we walked on slowly, still talking and recalling. Saxonhurst was famous for its theatre and plays. The distinguished company, “the nobs,” visitors, and the like, always moved to their places, passing across the stage, the curtain being drawn aside at one corner. As we emerged into the light, there appeared in front a vast inclined plane of joyous faces, shifting and glittering almost as if the sun was playing over it, which it was in the shape of good spirits and enjoyment. There was an exuberant delight abroad, which it was impossible not to catch, which, if it could be imported into the world outside, would be worth vast sums of money ; but these schoolboys have the private patent. A flood of light bathed the old and familiar proscenium, now some twenty or

thirty years old, and was thought a triumph of pictorial art. Grecian temple and pillars, Comedy and Tragedy, cheerful crimson draperies, and of course the worthy William in the centre. In front of all was the school orchestra, and the leader (a nervous, sprightly, bald-headed little man—an old friend), Mr. Le Bois, who played every known instrument. A quick-step inaugurated the performance with great spirit, the drum making itself conspicuous. Then the curtain rose on the old familiar “Castle Spectre.” Earl Osman, the most villainous of villains; Hassan, the most demoniacal and malignant of black slaves; the facetious gourmand, and the exciting scenes, and the old-fashioned but charming music—never was there a play so suited to the capacities and interests of a school. Every one hung suspended on the exciting chain of events; and when the Prince was in his dungeon, the guards gambling, and the sweet sounds of “Sing Megano! sing meganee,” inviting him to escape, and he rose softly, and climbed up to the window and threw himself from it, the roar of applause showed the intensity of relief! It

was curious for the grown-up schoolboy, for he himself had long ago spouted and declaimed upon those boards and played on that responsive instrument.


The air about Saxonhurst is of the rawest and most bracing kind. It was a shivering business being up betimes to gaslight, hurrying down the corridors, the hoar-covered ground outside gleaming in the blue morning air. The courtyard where we met, as we passed to breakfast, would have been welcomed by Mr. George Cattermole and embodied in a sketch—the sides of the building broken by towers; stray lights in stray windows, day breaking; the great flight of stairs leading up into the Gothic banqueting-hall. For the day that followed—too short for the grown-up school-boy—there was delightful occupation: skating on the long Dutch ponds, a walk of ten miles or so across crisp fields, the revisiting old scenes. On one day during the season was celebrated, in an *official* manner, the Christmas festival. A great banquet in the great banqueting-hall was offered to the friends and to the squires living about. I



recall the great picture-gallery, the room of reception on these occasions, crowded from end to end. There was a softness and a pleasure in the many greetings that was almost tender. I have found nothing so piquant or so welcome since, in the little surprises of life. I see the banqueting-room, with its stained-glass windows ; the long oak table crowded. I hear the hum of delightful voices, the pleasant chat, the very strangeness of the whole. Then came the slow breaking up, and the visit to the theatre, where the players acted their part in honour of their visitors. That scene, the cheerful red curtain, the scenery, and actors, has the ghostly air of a dream. If I went there now it would, no doubt, be grim prose ; but I cherish that Christmas vision of the grown-up schoolboy, and would not let it go for anything.


And then we all collected in the great baronial hall, waiting till another festival should set in—an oyster supper, of which there were two always at this season. A long table, with some fifty oyster-openers, and as many strong ale drinkers, the only beverage conceded as accompaniment to the lusty

bivalves, of which barrels were present. There was no aristocratic opening by deputy. Every one had to acquire the accomplishment on the spot or go without. The risk of maiming and fraying, therefore, lent an excitement. But the cheerfulest part was the line of faces, all familiar and half-familiar; altered in figure, altered in dress from the old times, all giving way to the most exuberant good humour. Then a breaking up, with a welcome whisper from two or three choice hands to meet half an hour hence in "some one's" room, to have a cigar and a long, long, delightful chatter over old days. "Some one's room" is up in the centre tower, just over the yawning archway, and under the great chiming clock. We gather there quietly, for it is against rule, and sit on and on, and smoke on and on, until the chimes above have grown quite familiar, like old friends, from repetition. It is a welcome subscription of items of news, about Jack, and Dick, and Tom—*poor* Tom, who broke his neck hunting last year. Where was A.? Oh! but did you hear about B.? I met him two months




ago with, etc. And C.? A bright blazing fire, bright gas, the cosiest of chairs,—and then until close upon two o'clock we listen on, our clanking, husky friend more and more noisily reminding us of the hours, until at last, with two severe thuds, which we felt along the walls, he echoed out "Two!" Then we broke up, and through long passages and galleries, with the gas-jets diminished to a faint blue speck of light, we stole away to our rooms. Sleep was very welcome after the weary day.

Other nights wound up with what was called "the Good Supper," given to the artists, who had so entertained the audience during the season. These were given in the great hall, while far down the shadows hung thickly, and through the mulioned windows and the coats of arms emblazoned, the moonlight came streaming. The fragrant punch travelled round, so did the song and chorus, every one who sang being entitled to call on another. The pleasant stories and jests went round until the clock began chiming. Then we all broke up. We would linger in the courtyard,



where the moonlight was streaming down aslant, and smoke a placid cigar. So the days went by, until the last night came round, with the "stranger's play." There was a prologue *à propos*, a vigorous drama which the greater experience of the players made to go off well, the whole to conclude with one of the newest screaming farces. To the grown-up schoolboy, who, as it were, led, the burst of greeting as he appeared was inexpressibly welcome. Every one did his best; the peals of laughter and the thorough enjoyment were inspiring. The "screaming" farce was borne triumphantly on the sympathetic wings of unbounded applauses to a triumphant issue. The recalls, the custom of launching bouquets, were there unknown; but if oranges or cherished cakes could have been showered without risk of hurt to the object of such homage, we might have been overwhelmed under such testimonials. As it was, a prolonged shouting—the whole house standing up to give their lungs better play—and sustained for many moments, made the rafters ring. So that night ended. With the raw dawn,






the rousing betimes in the darkness, the hurried breakfast by gaslight, and a chaise seen dashing through the open gateway, that joyful and gracious holiday came to an end for the grown-up school-boy. On such terms we might all be tempted to wish the old wheel of Time turned backwards for a short time, and that we might for the season—for this Christmas at least—become grown-up schoolboys.


In spite of the somewhat profane jeers at old Christmas and the “holly business,” supposed to be about as theatrical as the masks and armour of a burlesque, this good old season has still a charm and tender bloom of its own which is thoroughly genuine. Of course, if there be anything like overdoing the thing, any getting up of an artificial joviality, the natural result is flatness, disappointment, and even despondency. There has, indeed, been a little too much of estranged brothers, whose return is timed with miraculous accuracy for Christmas Eve, and who are brought in to the baronial hall, and made welcome—too much of hard old fellows reformed

and softened—by plum-pudding and a Christmas dinner. But, after all, if the festival be “taken naturally,” and as it comes—say on the morning itself, when the bells are chiming and the people hurrying to church—there is a gentle glow, a flush, a quiet melancholy, which attends no other known anniversary. This, on analysis, is chiefly associated with recollection. Our thoughts go back to days when the “table was full,” when it was lined with faces and figures—faces that have disappeared altogether, figures that are now so changed that we can hardly recognize them; an old dispensation that seems, so far off is it, like some lovely pictures in a play—days of youth faded for ever! The proof that there is this charm in Christmas is to be found in the fact that so many protest that the festival is painful or even disagreeable to them, because associated with happy meetings and dear persons long since passed away. A man who has passed thirty or so must of necessity have seen many Christmas days of varied complexions; for those yet older there must be a still more motley retrospect. A




few come back on me now, the recalling of which will be in tune with the present review.

One Christmas day comes back on me, again associated with the kitchen. A newly married pair, recently embarked in housekeeping, had secured a treasure in the shape of a portly matron, who was to act as cook and general servant until the house was "mounted" in a satisfactory manner. This lady was in the habit of introducing her husband, and as it turned out had surreptitiously introduced him in the capacity of lodger, as well as boarder. His presence was, however, handsomely sanctioned on Christmas Day, a concession that must have amused the pair. Master and mistress having each parted from an affectionate circle—now far away—had no materials available, with which to fill a round table with smiling faces. They had, therefore, gone out to a cheerful house, where the host and hostess had gathered a select party of friends, and where the evening had gone by with much quiet enjoyment. On their return, when the door was opened to them, an agitated female face was



visible, and almost at once there rose furious sounds of angry voices, of cries even, and of animated furniture. "For Heaven's sake, would master go below and part them? They were killing one another." Some friends in the same profession with the lady-of-all-work's husband—he was a tailor—had quarrelled with the rest, and the matter was being resolved in the way that used to be usual among gentlemen. One guest had protested that "he would have the blood" of his host. The ladies of the party were clinging to the infuriated combatants, who, with coats off and chairs flourished aloft, were desperately determined—the one to have, the other to preserve the blood alluded to.

There are houses where to dine on Christmas Day comes next to the pleasures of the family circle. Such festivals are usually given by some pair without family; the gentleman may be a man of many friends, and with a certain position, and who likes to gather about him those old, warm friends who themselves looked forward to these days of meeting, and had no "olive branches"



at home. The night passes by under a mellow and golden light, smiles and good humour are present, and we go home in a quiet and subdued tone of mind.

Christmas abroad is disheartening enough, and instead of bringing on jollity brings depression. You are a mere exile; the rejoicings affect you with a certain dreariness. But it must be said that in foreign countries the rejoicing is more spiritual, less material, and has the air of a religious rite. The snow somehow does not seem to attend so regularly, though it is bitterly cold, and there is a generally bleak and marrow-piercing blast abroad. One season was thus spent in the sands and resins of Arcachon, a place of small châteaux and tiny bungalows, with only half a dozen English settlers. The bustling, cosy grocer of the place, who broke his English as he did his lump sugar, found it profitable to affect a certain jollity of a comestible sort, and sent in all manner of pseudo delicacies which he supposed were appropriate to the season. Perched on a hill and overlooking the sea was the new church to

Our Lady of Arcachon, a handsome pile, but where the music was in the hands or mouth of one of those brazen-throated official chanters who in France do duty for organ and choir, and who contrive to sing with an untunefulness maintained with a marvellous accuracy of tone. This grinder did duty on ordinary occasions; but a few days before Christmas Day a rumour got abroad of some amazing musical preparations by which the glory of the festival was to be enhanced. Our landlord was a stout, cask-shaped being, with the usual self-conscious air which never deserts a Frenchman under even the most trying physique. This gentleman's name was Poque; he had musical tastes and a piano, which, like his own voice, could only be called the remains of a fine instrument. He used, however, the recipe always valuable in such cases, namely, to supply—by oratorical vehemence and facial expression—the musical sounds that were wanting. One morning it was known through the town that the *curé* had sought an interview by special appointment with this gentleman, and on his departure delighted

maids and menials came with the great news that "M. Poque was to sing at the midnight Mass." The same intelligence reached to the shops, and with every article purchased came smiles of congratulation. How charming it was! M. Poque, Mr. or Mrs.'s landlord, was to sing at the midnight Mass; as if a special obligation was laid upon the tenant so fortunate in possessing an harmonious landlord! By-and-by sounds of practice were heard overhead, with much cantering over scales; the great Poque exercising himself. The congratulations were kept up until the festival day itself. The night arrived; a bitter, frosty one, with the moon out, and there was something picturesque in the shadowy pines, and the brightly illuminated roads covered with figures—Frenchwomen in their neat caps, husbands, and sweethearts. The church blazed with light. The ceremonies were imposing, and even touching, with a welcome simplicity. There were flowers, and hymns by the young girls, and, of course, the indefatigable "chanter." Then the good pastor ascended the pulpit, and gave a little sermon,

judiciously short, not more than seven or eight minutes. Then the organ began the symphony, and at last, M. Poque, with much quivering, much rolling of his *r*'s, but with very slender musical sound, gave out the Christmas hymn. A gentleman, who fancied he was acquainted with the strain, joined in most discordantly, as if in ridicule. I noted also crowds of faces below, upturned to the gallery.

I am ashamed to say the irreverent Frenchmen, who crowded the church to the door, standing up as is their wont and conversing, gave way to loud roars of laughter at this failure of their townsman, without the least regard to the sacredness of the place. The performance broke down, and the whole scene was anything but edifying.



## CHAPTER XVI.

## OUR SUBURBAN COMMON.

KEW Common is familiar and ordinary ground enough. Like Sterne's *désobligeante*, "something might be said for it, but not much ; but when a man by a few words," etc. Yet with a short week, spent thus in rurality, it became a glorified common. It was pleasant to think of.

The common enjoys a great publicity, and has at the same time a privacy of its own. For the London road cuts straight across it, approaching, however, with a sort of respect, abating its stiff pretensions, and condescending to a sort of narrow rustic approach, before it enters on the expanse of our common. Then the strangers aloft on the omnibuses wonder at our rural and quietly picturesque air ; and the superior tenants of the open

carriages look around approvingly and say, "What a retired, old-fashioned spot!" The carters and waggoners, of whom there is a vast number, are never troubled with speculations of the kind. All they think about is simply the Wheel of Fortune public-house, whose tap enjoys a wide celebrity, not, however, unaided by singular local advantages. The Wheel of Fortune commands the entry to our common; sweeps, rakes that entry, as though it were a fort, and levels its pieces so seductively, that he must be no true waggoner who can avoid halting in that convenient plateau, just to moisten his parched throat after that dusty bit of travel. There is a glaring publicity along the broad high-road, which is seen for half a mile, and the better principle has time to muster its forces; but here there is no time for reflection, for the victim finds himself under the guns of the fortress in a second, and must surrender.

Our common is a large sweep of green, stretching away, and bounded on all sides by veteran houses. It would be impossible to define its shape accurately. It rambles away after its own devices.

Indeed, taking its shape in connection with the texture of its grass, it often suggests to me a vast and ragged old blanket, worn and ravelled away out of its original square, and stretched and tacked down over our common. A rather rickety white fence, consisting of a single rail, straggles round it, and within this enclosure a veteran and bony steed browses away, though the green blanket is worn into holes and patches, while round him younger and equally mendicant horses take their meals. In the morning it is a favourite pastime to go and see two or three unhappy men striving to catch these animals, halter in hand. The steeds are slowly driven into a corner with much waving of arms and menace, and, I must say, much nervousness on the part of the men, as they seem on the eve of securing their prey. The old pony, in whom his followers seem to have implicit confidence, throws a careless glance over his impatient shoulder, as he retires, which is full of significance. He is biding his time, as his enemies well know, and malignantly chooses the moment when the halter is almost on his neck to give his signal. In

an instant he throws up his heels, makes a feint to the right, another to the left, causing his oppressors to dance backwards and forwards, and fiercely is away through an opening, his old heels up again, followed by the whole party, save one little roan, who is cut off.

I delight in the irregularity of the old houses which fringe our common, not two of which are of the same height or stoutness. They are all veterans, a good deal decayed, and seem to lean on each other for support. Nearly all have old rusty, red-tiled roofs, which are scooped like shells or spoons. Some have thick warm "ulsters" of ivy that reach to their very heels, and give a very cosy air. Off our common are various green lanes, in one of which a builder, with more taste than is found in such beings, has erected a long row of Elizabethan little buildings, less than villas, more than cottages, many of which for some reason unknown stand unlet. In front is a hedgerow and green fields, and the tea-gardens of the Wheel of Fortune, where of Sundays and holidays re-echo the humorous notes of our London 'Arry and his

female friend. In fine weather these little tabernacles are charming, with the Virginia creepers overgrowing the whole front of the house, their little rooms, French windows, and tiny kitchens like the forecastle of a yacht. If one were a writer of very limited means, one could do well in these establishments, for the rent is no more than thirty pounds a year, and the fee-simple can be purchased for three or four hundred pounds. Here an anxious, wiry woman, with corkscrew curls, considerably older than her half-military, half-tailor-like husband, looks after our wants, and talks with nervous awe of the Wheel of Fortune and Mr. Lightband, the proprietor; for in the associations connected with our common I can see that the Wheel of Fortune and Lightband hold an awful place. Everything seems to be referred to the Wheel of Fortune. Its proprietor is the link between it and the outer world, and is supposed to be rolling in wealth. If anything be wanted we can send up to the Wheel. If there is a difficulty we can ask at the Wheel. When everything is run out it can be got at the Wheel. The stray

butcher, stray grocer, stray baker may fail, which they often do, but we run to the Wheel, and all is repaired.

Our common is ordinarily a dreamy sort of place, and seem to doze and blink in the sun all day. The church, an old-fashioned structure, is set down in the middle with a little tray of dominoes behind it, which are its tombstones, and which are enclosed so neatly within the edges of the tray that one almost expects some gigantic footman to come and "take away." A royal duchess comes sometimes and sits in state. But on Sunday evenings no one would know our common; all access to the Wheel is cut off by a block of light carts, waggonettes, hansoms, and "shandrydans," while inside the open windows can be seen innumerable 'Arrys and Jemimars in the full display of that half-amatory, half-gormandizing joviality, which is their notion of happiness, 'Arry's "harm" (meaning, of course, a limb) finding its permanent position of repose round Jemimar's waist. As we pass down to the other extremity of our common, to its river-side, we find whole lines of


gigs and Whitechapels, in a rickety state of genuflexion about the shafts, their horses picketed about or bestowed in stables. Every house in the row is devoted to "Tea at ninepence," affects a kind of rustic air, and by the aid of a few flower-pots ambitions the designation of "tea-gardens." As the evening wears on the merriment becomes uproarious. Should one be inclined to take counsel with the keeper of the pike on the bridge, he could give us some strange little illustrations of our 'Arry's mode of taking his fun ; sport to him, but, in a commercial sense, death to the pike-keeper.

This, again, is uneventful, and may seem scarcely worth recording. But round such places and season cluster associations, which are welcome to every one—just as you will hear a gourmand recall, with delight, the best-done dish of cutlets he ever tasted in his life, procured at some little mean, unpretending inn.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### MY DOGS—THE VIXENS.

THE literary man should surely have his dog, a true companion and faithful, but well chosen, not to be made a "pet," but a friend of. Most dogs have good qualities, and if unspoiled and treated honestly by their masters, will repay any kindness. There are, of course, some hopelessly foolish or vicious creatures. I have been fortunate in a series of these trusty companions—from Cæsar the Newfoundland, who performed in the "Dog of Montargis," to my late ten years' favourite and companion, TOBY. All are more or less bound up with my numerous literary tasks and speculations: have, as it were, looked on, and assisted, and unconsciously encouraged the writer at his work.





I must first tell of "Vixen," an early friend; a very yellow, wiry, not to say stubbly terrier of the middle size, with ears cropped sharply, iron-grey whiskers, and a general air of watchful inquiry for rats; who, having run away, was brought back with a string round her, by a ragged boy. This is Vixen the First, originally purchased in open market. Her ransom was half a crown. Her first introduction to the family had been from under a hall chair. When it was attempted to draw her from this lair (by the neck), she growled and snapped. On this display of an evil soul, it was almost resolved to deport her, but on entreaty one chance was given her, of which she availed herself so speedily, so engagingly, as to become a universal favourite, the best of companions, most honest of creatures. This was in the old days. She shared in everything. As her master read and studied, she had her corner, where, coiled up into something like a snail-shell, and making a pillow of her own hind leg, she dreamed the most exquisite dreams, and groaned over charming processions of endless rats. There

were more delightful holidays when the sun was shining, and we went forth for a whole day's walking: when we came to the park and the copses, and sat under a tree, and basked in the sun; the master finding "Rookwood" excellent company, while the Vixen, with a profoundly business-like air, cultivated natural history, and explored the district as if she were a canine botanist, bound to report on the Flora of the region. Sometimes she would start a rabbit, and pursue it; but these were rare openings. Very pleasant were those bivouacs, and I feel the scent of the May blossoms floating past me now.

Once, there was a large review of soldiers in this place, and we agreed to go together, as usual. But I noticed that the Vixen was rather taken aback by the long files of red coats: taking a few steps towards them, halting, and, with suspicious inquiry in the nostrils, scrutinizing the arrangements up and down. She did not like the distant bugle, and looked round uneasily. But when the artillery came thundering and clanking up beside us, and the first gun and the

second nearly shook her off her balance, without a second's delay, she fled, with ears down, body stretched out, hare-like, a victim of sudden panic, scouring the wide plain. I beheld her between two lines of soldiers. I saw her through the smoke, giving one hurried glance over her shoulder. For her, the end of *her* world was come. Pandemonium was at her heels. Grief and rage filled my heart. My companion was gone for ever—gone into that cloud of smoke. I should never see her again. I made a vain attempt at pursuit, but she grew into a yellow speck, far away over the plain. It was all over. I was alone. I was miles from home, and towards home I now went, moodily, and in deep grief. There, faces of surprise and eager questions met me. "What have you done with the Vixen?" Tired and heated, not in the mood to be questioned, I entered the study, about to fling myself into the easy-chair, and mourn privately and wearily. When lo! I see *in* the easy-chair, fagged also, and very dusty and travel-stained, the yellow runaway, the *sauve qui peut*, lifting her head, as if it were from a

pillow, languidly, wagging her tail, uncertain whether about to receive punishment or congratulation. She had never taken that journey before, yet had made her way home by an unfamiliar road, and must have travelled at headlong speed.


We were always on the best and most familiar terms, and yet she had a quick temper. She was passionate; but *she knew that failing, and controlled it*. On a few occasions a little chastisement was threatened, and she retreated under a chair, and there, as from a fortification, looked out, all tusks, and teeth, and snarl, with her upper lip turned inside out, filled with a demoniacal fury. The next moment she would be all love and friendliness.

She was not regarded with much favour above stairs, as wanting refinement and elegant manners. Once when there was company, a gentleman playing the violin—an instrument she detested—the door was pushed open softly, and she entered, bearing a large junk of stolen beef! There was a kind of pride in her achievement, an air of

guilt, and also of stolid audacity in the manner in which she entered, walking slowly and leisurely in through the midst of the company—half skulking, half inviting attention, her eyes rolling round the corner towards her master with a comic expression of doubt. The scene was true comedy, for it was a polite meeting—silks and fine clothes, tea and the “quality”—and the intruder, wiry and unkempt and a little dusty, had come direct from the stable.

Vixen the First lived many years, during which we enjoyed many delightful country walks together, and she killed innumerable rats, and swam in rivers and brooks, and fought other dogs with credit and reputation, and was a most pliant and entertaining companion. Sometimes her tastes, being of a vagabond sort, led her away from home in the company of dogs about town, who were of wild and even profligate manners. These excesses gave her a taste for the pleasures of the table, and an immoderate fancy for meat, which had the usual fatal results of a free life. In due time she was laid up with an attack of

the malady so fatal to dogs. There was the usual fierce scratchings, and finally the wiry hair began to come off in patches. Eminent physicians were called in, but no cure could be effected. Her rage for meat, however, was not to be eradicated—nay, it developed with restraint; and a fatal outrage, when she was detected on the tablecloth after lunch, in the act of trying to get a convenient hold of a limbless fowl, preparatory to carrying it away, caused a council to be held at once in reference to her case. It was resolved, after a secret deliberation, to get rid of Vixen the First: not, I am happy to say, by execution or other violent measures, but by conferring her as a gift on a gentleman in the country, who fortunately had a taste for “varmint,” and for this reason was willing to overlook much. But here she could not overcome her old appetites, whetted by sharp country air and pastimes; and we were soon grieved to learn that the amateur of “varmint” had found himself constrained to part with his useful assistant. More than two years later, at a seaside place, a decayed-looking “cur” came



creeping across the street from the heels of a Sikes-looking fellow, and looked up to me with wistful recognition, as though half afraid that such acknowledgment would take the shape of the prompt and sharp kick. There was something very piteous in this cringing self-depreciation. The dog, too, was thin and bony, and the tail, once carried so jauntily, as a knowing fellow wears his hat, was now gathered up timorously under the legs. Suddenly Sikes gave a whistle and a sharp curse and the luckless animal slunk off. That was the last I saw of Vixen the First.

A year or so later, some one brings to the house a little diminutive Skye terrier, coal black, rough-haired, not uncomely, and about two hands long. This gentleman is known as "Jack." Being a lady's property, he is forthwith pampered, and made free of drawing-rooms and bed-rooms: which I feel acutely as a retrospective injustice to the memory of the lost Vixen the First.

Jack was, I suppose, the most delightful instance of real, natural, undisguised *selfishness* that could

be conceived. Loaded with benefits, stuffed with delicacies, he made not the slightest pretence of caring for any one in the world. In justice to him, it must be admitted that he never attempted to bite; but after his meal, or indeed at any season, when he was stretched at length on his rug, any endearments from even the privileged hand of his mistress were resented with testy growlings. The only one for whom he had toleration or the faint appearance of regard was a person of low degree, an old retainer of the family, who kept a little whip privately for his special behoof, and who used to hold conversations with him through the pantry-window: "I'll give you the whip, I will," "I'll teach you," etc. To this official, I am glad to say for the sake of our common animal nature, he was almost fawning in his behaviour, making affectation of being overjoyed to see him, and when the retainer would return, after an absence of a week, going—artful hypocrite!—into convulsions of whinings, jumpings, and such pretences of delight. His mistress has been away a month, and he has been known to trot up




the kitchen stairs to see what the commotion of her return might be about, stand at a distance, look on at the new arrival, then coolly turn his back, and strut leisurely down again, as though the matter was unworthy his attention! Yet it was almost impossible not to feel an interest in him, for this very indifference or independence. And he had his good points also. He was a gentleman; seemed always to recollect his good birth and breeding, and no persuasions of servants could retain him below in their kitchen quietly save in very cold weather, when he had his reasons for engaging the great fire there. Faithful to his principles, he knew their dinner hour to the moment, and no seductions of high society would *then* prevent his going down to join them at that desirable time. Sometimes, if detained above by stratagem, he would at last escape, and would come galloping in among them, panting, with an air as though he were conferring a favour, and as who should say, "I was unavoidably detained, but I have tried hard to make up for lost time."

Another merit of his was rare personal courage.

He was afraid of no one, man, woman, child, or dog. For so tiny a creature this was really to be admired. Attack him with a stick or umbrella, and he would stand on his defence, with his face honourably towards you, growling, snarling, and even *mewling* with rage, and all the time retiring cleverly and slowly until he got to shelter.

In the streets he trotted along with infinite dignity, and towards other dogs bore himself with a haughty contempt. Nothing was more amusing than to see a big, frisking, free-mannered dog run at him and coolly tumble him over in the dust, and to see the little outraged fellow pick himself up, all over dust, growling and snarling with rage and mortification. More amusing still was it to see a great Newfoundland dog stalk up, not quite sure whether this could be a rat, or one of his own species, whom he was bound to respect. As he became importunate in his curiosity, and troublesome in his half-friendly, half-hostile attention, it was delicious to see Jack turn and snap deliberately at him, sputtering rage, while the giant would start



back confounded, not knowing what to make of it.

Seven, eight, nine years roll by, and he is actually getting to be a little old gentleman. He wheezes and coughs a good deal as he goes upstairs. His black eyes are not so brilliant as of yore. But he has become snappish and impatient, more testy and selfish than ever. He is, in fact, just like other old gentlemen. His appetite is just as great, and he *will* eat hearty meals, which, however, do not agree with him ; and though he is usually unwell after these hearty banquets, the lesson is quite thrown away on him. His fine black whiskers have turned grey and rusty. In the house, too, changes have taken place. He has lost friends, and it grieves me to think that in these old days of his he found a change, and learnt what the world was. I wonder did he make a sort of Wolsey reflection on the world, when, with much wheezing and coughing, he had toiled upstairs, and coming confidently in at the drawing-room would be met with a stern " Go down, sir!—go down!" But what could one do for him? He

had, besides, an affection of the hinder leg, something in the nature of slight paralytic stroke, brought on by excess at table.


Another wiry yellow dog arrives on the scene, carried in the arms of a Jewish-looking gentleman, in a squirrel cap, whose profession is dogs—with so gentle and amiable an air about her, and with such a resemblance to my old favourite, that I at once redeem her from captivity for the sum of fifteen shillings, and christen her “Vixen the Second.”

She was the strangest combination in physique ; with the yellow wiry-haired body of the ordinary terrier, she had the snout of the bull-terrier, perfectly coal black, and the brightest and largest of black eyes darting forward like dark carbuncles. With this truculent and remarkable exterior she showed herself the most engaging and gentle creature. Children shrank from her as she jogged by with the true bull-dog, wary, business-like air. But she did not want for pluck or courage, as every street boy knew—a class whom she regarded

with detestation. Half a mile away, the sight of a pair of bare legs, a cap, and a torn jacket threw her into a fury: down went her head and ears, and she was off like an arrow, and presently flying round the bare legs. She was up to anything in the way of sport or gamesomeness, and if pursued by any rough, at whose heels she had been flying, would retreat under a cart, and there stand snarling and spitting horribly. Sometimes correction became necessary, and then she would take her corporal punishment with eyes closed fast, shrinking away from it, and crouching, but with true Spartan fortitude, never uttering even a yelp. Her intelligence was surprising. If her master assumed an expression of displeasure, she grew disturbed and uneasy. There was a favourite exercise to show off her sagacity. When he was reading and she half snoozing with her chin on her fore paws, he would say in a low, quiet voice of displeasure, "What made you do it? What do you mean?" Her first motion would be to raise her head and look round in a mournfully deprecating way, as who should say, "What


is it, master?" If the reproach were repeated, she would look again with her great sad eyes, the tail pleading slowly, and finally raising herself in the most deprecating way, would steal over, and, with a sort of groan, would raise herself on her hind legs and piteously implore forgiveness. The moment she saw a smile, her tail wagged joyfully and she went back.

She had the sweetest disposition, this Vixen the Second. She had even taught herself, Heaven knows how, a sort of moral restraint and discipline. She had her rule of life, based upon what she thought would be pleasing to him who guided her existence. Take an instance. We all know those harmless salutations and flirtations interchanged among those of her race, who are perfect strangers to each other, and which appear almost an etiquette. No one had so keen a zest for these interviews as Vixen. Her remarkable air, a little bizarre, but highly attractive, drew crowds of admirers around her. Yet when they came with their insidious homage, she would indeed stop, for she knew what was due to the courtesies; she




would, for a second, be dazzled ; but in another moment the moral principle had asserted itself, and with a secret agony—for the struggle cost her much, she was dog after all—she tore herself away, and came rushing to make up for even that second's dalliance. On one occasion only did her resolution fail her, and that was when a matchless bull-terrier, of a dazzling snow-white, and an exquisite shape, breed, and symmetry, made some advances. He was dressed in the height of the mode, richly, with a collar decorated around with silver and most musical bells. This captivating creature was too much for her ; she was deaf to all angry calls—threats even—seemed determined to pursue this fascinating acquaintance, and prepared to give up all and follow him. But this was a brief intoxication.

For Vixen the Second, the kitchen had not that charm which it has for other dogs. Neither had she that liking for ostlers, footmen, etc., which her kind usually entertain. She was always scheming to get upstairs ; below, her ears were always strained for the far-off whistle ; indeed, her organi-



zation was so delicate, and her affection so strong, that she knew the peculiar sound of her master's step as the hall-door opened and he entered. After breakfast every morning there was heard a faint "pat-pat" on the oilcloth in the hall, drawing nearer. Those who watched her found that this was her favourite *secret* gait, with which she contrived to make escape from below when they wished to detain her, thus passing the pantry-door on tiptoe. Sitting at his study table, her master would see her moving inward mysteriously, and presently a wistful nose and a pair of more wistful eyes were introduced, softly looking round the edge, and saying as plain as nose and eyes could say, "Do let me come in, please." She would stay in that position until the solicited invitation was given, then enter on her favourite gait, receive congratulations, and proceed to make her favourite turnings round and round before coiling herself properly. Often, with a heavy sigh, she would let herself drop full length upon her side and lie out lazily. This was all sheer coquetry, for she could have entered boldly and in the usual






way of her kind. The only exception was after washing day, below: a terrible ceremony, which she shrank from. When she saw the large tub brought out, she skulked under the table with signs of horror and repulsion; then, in the first unguarded moment, disappeared into some strange and ingenious place of concealment, which for a long time defied the strictest search. After this washing operation was happily over, she would come bursting in abruptly, her wiry hair standing on end through imperfect drying, and would go prancing about, snuffling and coughing, evidently thrown off her centre by the operation. It was the soap, I think, which affected her, through the smell of the alkali employed. It was no craven shrinking from the water, for she swam bravely: and on the coldest days, when curs were cowering away from the water's edge, she would plunge in boldly to fetch out sticks, evidently in obedience to her high sense of duty, though trembling with cold, and much buffeted by the rough waves.

Jack, still alive, shared in all our excursions, and shared Vixen the Second's kennel. At last, how-

ever, the time came when these pleasant relations were to be broken up for ever. Old Jack began to fail, yet gradually. When the cheerful cry for going abroad reached him, he would rise, walk a short way eagerly, then recollect himself, as it were, and go back. He preferred his easy-chair by the fire. He grew more cross every day, or rather hour. He found the temperature of his own private house in the yard too severe, and used actually to simulate exhaustion, to get taken in and be laid before the kitchen fire, and treated with tenderness and interest by female hands. He would bask in that agreeable atmosphere, lying with an almost comic languor, apparently without sense or motion, save when any one touched him as if to remove him, when he would forget his part and emit a low cantankerous growl. Seeing the success of this manœuvre, he often resorted to it, until the public at last refused to be so imposed on, and rather neglected his touching symptoms. This only made him more peevish and disagreeable. A more genuine symptom was the small size to which he was shrinking: grow-


ing smaller every hour ; originally small, he had become now of a very tiny pattern—his rich black coat had grown rusty, and his dark face and muzzle had turned an iron grey. In these later days he took refuge in a sort of indifference, which had the air of a wounded reserve. He kept himself to himself, as it were. Invited in, he did not seem to care to accept civilities. The paralytic affection seemed to gain on him, arching his back, and drawing up his hinder leg. Poor old Jack !

One winter evening set in more than usually severe—frosty, with a bitter wind. Events of some importance had been going forward in the mansion, and throughout the day, beyond the customary invitation to come and take his breakfast, not much notice had been bestowed on him. Later, at a less engrossing period, a faithful maid, perhaps feeling compunction, went to look after him and bring him in. He was discovered, his meal, untouched, lying near him, cold and collapsed, and with scarcely any sign of life. He was carried in tenderly, and carefully laid down on the warm hearth, and rubbed carefully and assiduously. The



sight of his loved kitchen fire, and its genial warmth—the sun to which this little canine Parsee always turned his face with something like idolatry—seemed to draw him back to life. His eyes opened languidly, his little shrunken body glowed anew. But as he made an effort to get nearer to the fire, the head dropped over quietly, and the hinder leg gave a little twitch. Life had ebbed away very gently. A simple basket, containing his poor old remains, was carried unostentatiously to a neighbouring square, where a friendly gardener, who had often noted him taking his easy morning constitutional over the pleasant sward, undertook the sexton's duty, and performed the last decent offices in a pretty flower-bed. Vixen the Second attended as mourner, at the same time exhibiting an uneasy curiosity about the basket; otherwise she showed no concern.


If Vixen had a penchant, it was for butchers' shops: which she discovered afar off, and to which, if we were on the other side of the street, she crossed over, in a most circuitous and artful fashion, and with a guilty creeping way, quite foreign to



her. She entered privately under the counter, crept round leisurely, and invariably secured some choice "swag." Indeed, some of her robberies were too daring, as on the day of a joint visit to a confectioner's shop, when she partook of various morsels tossed to her, yet lingered behind on some pretext. She was presently seen to emerge at full speed from the confectioner's door, carrying with infinite difficulty a large bath bun in her jaws, the confectioner himself in angry pursuit. How she got possession of this delicacy could not be ascertained; he said, "it were when his back was turned," an affront he seemed to feel. He was, of course, indemnified. When taken to sit for her portrait, she imparted a dramatic element into that operation. The thorough investigation she made; the sniffing at the chemicals; the speculation as to the apparatus, camera, etc., which seemed to have some suspicious connection with firearms; the searching behind the theatrical draperies; but when business came, her sense of duty at once asserted itself, and the operator owned that he had found his human sitters more

difficult to "pose" and far more affected. She arrayed herself on the cushion placed for her, and gazed with her bright eyes intently on a bit of biscuit held out ostentatiously behind the camera. There was a gentle motion in her tail, but this I firmly believe she was not conscious of, or she would have suppressed it. The result was surprising—I am looking at it now—sharp, clear, unblurred, and lifelike.

Thus our walks! The hotter, the more dusty the day, the longer the country road, the more welcome to Vixen the Second. Once the great green park was reached, with its eddying hills, its delightful slopes and swards, under the thorns, then supremest felicity set in; the race, the eating of grass, the tossing of the head, the fresh scamper, the drinking at the clear brook side, the book drawn out on the soft bank, with reader and book reflected in the brightest and most flashing of mirrors, while Vixen the Second is away on short explorings. Now a whirr from the root of the old tree that leans over the water, and the restless investigator has made out a nest; now a




sudden splash and yelp of disappointment, and the nose is pointed quivering, as a great water rat leaps in, evicted from his lodgings.

Or, one might come suddenly on a stray party of boys with a donkey. There would be a tall fellow or two, who equally relished their share of the donkey, though scarcely to be ranked in the category of boys; one of whom, by superior force, was presently mounted, his feet almost touching the ground—then off they set full speed, voices chattering and screaming with delight, the dust in clouds, hoofs pattering, and a whole rain of pokes, thumps, pushes, pinches! Comic, and so it seems to Vixen, who, in a second, has her ears down, stoops, and is off at full speed. She gives low shrieks of enjoyment, and as the clouds of dust clear, she is seen keeping up with the party, attaching herself to the heels of the donkey, giving him every now and again a short sharp bite. In a moment the donkey's back shoots up in the air, and Vixen, rolling over in the dust, is left behind; in a second moment she is up again, shrieking and yelping with enjoyment, and


again has her sly bite below, but is more cautious in avoiding the return stroke. Up goes the back again, and suddenly there is a great scramble, and abrupt stillness, with a cloud of dust rising slowly. As it clears away afar off, I am toiling on behind, I see that the last uprising of the back (stimulated by Vixen) has been successful—that the lazy boy has been shot over the donkey's head—that one of his infantine aides has been upset in the confusion—that the donkey has been down himself as far as his knees, but is now standing like a stock or a rock in the centre of the disaster.

This faithful friend, and those who admired and respected her, were soon to be parted. It has been mentioned that she was of a delicate, finely strung nature, susceptible in the highest degree: skilful acquaintances, remarking the curious prominence and lustre of her wonderful eyes, prophesied in a highly encouraging way, "I shouldn't be at all surprised if that dog went mad one of these days." It came to pass that the family had to go and travel, and Vixen the Second was left behind, according to the newspaper phrase, "during





a protracted sojourn." Special instructions were left that she should enjoy every luxury of diet, walkings, etc.; but, as was learned on return, nothing could a charm impart. Whether the matron in whose charge she was left, performed her trust conscientiously, it is not for me to say; her own rapturous declaration, that "if ever there was an 'appy dog on this world's earth, it were her," seemed to be confuted by Vixen the Second's silent protest, and cowering away as the matron made advances. I had more reliance on that simple assurance of the honest creature who had never deceived. Vixen was in a tumult of joy to welcome us, and executed many strange and characteristic dances in testimony of her joy; but otherwise she had grown dull and dejected. The matron (I heard later) had been fond of giving tea-parties, having a large circle of friends, and was therefore inclined to "drat that 'ere dog" or anything that interfered with her social pleasures. She had never treated Vixen the Second to any delicious country walks or green fields. However, we would now resume them on the old scale.



We went out "to shop" that very day, and, entering a bookseller's, Vixen went off as usual to explore corners behind the book boxes, unearth bits of indiarubber lying in corners, and keep her nose in practice by finding traces of rats or cats. The shopman comes mysteriously, and says—

"Why, I think, sir, your dog is ill."

I follow him into a most retired corner, tremendously suggestive of rats, and there see poor Vixen the Second rolling contorted on the ground in a fit. *Think* she was ill!

It was a long struggle; but the faithful creature, when encouraged and called to, made a wild effort to raise herself on her convulsed hinder legs, as she was accustomed to do to receive friendly approbation, but instantly fell back and rolled upon the ground. She got over it—walked home a little wild and confused, but still walked home. Next day we set off on a long, long walk, the first of the series, which should gradually restore her lusty health. It was a fine fresh day, and we took a long stretch of miles along a sort of pier. Vixen was not full of alacrity—was rather heavy,

with a curious suspiciousness in her manner, halting every now and again, and looking about her as if she expected danger. Still she exerted herself on every invitation to investigate holes for rats, etc., but her heart was not in the work. It was mere complaisance—the old wish to oblige and be agreeable. We walked until evening, then we turned. A butcher's boy passed, though without his insignia, but she knew him—the old instinct—and I own it was not with displeasure that I saw the sharp wiry ears go down, and Vixen make at his legs. He was some way in front, and she had some distance to rush. To my surprise, she quite passed her old enemy, pursuing her course as if, to use the butcher's expression, "a thousand devils were at her tail." The yellow figure grew smaller in the distance. I jumped on a wall and saw it growing yet smaller—still going on at the same frantic pace. Now she was a faint yellow speck; now she was a mile away, now out of sight. I never saw her again. A tragic exit—as it were rushing away into space.

A fishing village was between me and my

home, where there was an idle, noisy, ne'er-do-well throng, ripe for any baiting or any mischief. I asked for her here, but they had seen nothing. Yet there was an odd manner about those desperados, as I recollected afterwards. When I got home, no Vixen's wiry head was put out of the study-door. Perhaps the poor honest creature had met a cruel end among these ruffians; perhaps she had felt her megrims coming on, and from the pain had rushed away, and these fellows had raised the cry of "Mad dog!" and had hunted the gentle creature to death. I have another theory, quite consistent with her gentle temper, that she felt madness coming on her, and rushed off thus into the void and into space, severing all ties, in preference to doing involuntary injury to those she loved. But I have no warrant for this theory.

## CHAPTER XVIII.


## MY DOGS—TOBY.

I NOW come to the latest and best of my favourites—gone, I may say, but yesterday.

“Died, at his town residence, on December 21, Toby Turnspit, Esq., much regretted by a large circle of friends.” Something to this effect might be put in the obituary columns. Yes, Toby was gone; one more fine nature lost. I could have better spared a better dog. All the neighbours knew him, and will miss his familiar figure: a strange combination made by Nature in some freak, for, as in the case of the older dwarfs, a fine intelligent face and head were yoked with a kind of misshapen body. He was bow-legged even to deformity. Yet, to the last he thought himself as irresistible as his fellows, and would not admit, like the ugly Wilkes, that he was only a quarter of

an hour behind the handsomest. When a group would stop in the street to converse for a few moments, were he passing he would join them without any restraint from his infirmity.

Toby's family was of foreign extraction, and originally came from Germany. An English lady and gentleman, who were travelling in that country, were attracted by the strange-looking pair, their honest Teutonic manners and virtues, and induced them to come over to this country, where they were presently settled on the family estate. In due time a young family grew up about them, which exhibited, in very marked contrast to the natives of the district by which they were surrounded, all the peculiarities of their foreign origin. No stranger failed to remark the square build, the short, sturdy limb, the composed, thoughtful eye, the general air of gravity—so curiously opposed to the carelessness, and even frivolity, of the children of the soil about them. Gradually, however, as the offspring of the strangers grew up, they intermarried with the offspring of neighbours, and a sort of motley race was the result, though it was




made a point of honour that some scions, at least, of the family should keep apart and maintain the purity of the old stock. To the ethnologist was thus suggested something akin to what is seen in certain parts of the kingdom, where are found descendants of old Danish or Dutch colonies, who are still to be distinguished by a certain grave reserve, and other physical signs, significant of their old ancestry.

Toby, one of these young sojourners in a foreign land, when playing carelessly by the roadside, had attracted the notice of some strangers, who fancied the young fellow's size and spirit, and conceived the idea that, with training and town diet, he could be made useful in a household. Many thus bring home favourite attendants from the Indies, and it must be said there is singularity in this whim. They may wish, perhaps, that those about them should be different to those about others. Such dependants, indeed, suggest the dwarfs and monsters who used to form part of a king's retinue. This, however, does not concern us here ; nor, indeed, the young Toby, who entered on his new

service, and parted with the completest indifference from his aged father and mother. These, again, it must be said, showed no sign of feeling.

He accordingly came into residence, and excited curiosity as well as amusement, not so much from the singular mould in which Nature had formed him, as from the utter unconsciousness that there was anything about him that would not command respect, or, at least, not attract attention. His long black body, which had an eel-like sinuosity, was propped upon four of the shortest, squattest limbs that could be conceived off an alligator. They turned out exactly like the legs of those creatures, and the front ones followed exactly the outlines of a little lyre. Add to this his long snout-like head, with a lorn gaze and almost legal solemnity—for his ear hung and flapped about him like the full-dress wig of a Queen's Counsel—and it was not surprising that I at last came to have a shyness in taking him out for long walks, owing to the comments which his singular presence invited. For these, of course, his companion was not accountable, yet, unfairly, I was made to suffer for being





in his company. His very fashion of fixing a sad contemplative gaze on those who insulted him, was in itself a challenge to renewed and more coarse remarks.

My departed friend had the sweetest and most unruffled disposition. What a fine nature he had! He was never in ill-humour, even in his last illness, which he bore with a fine patience. He allowed freedoms which others would not. You might take up and handle his poor twisted limbs, which many thoughtlessly did; he did not like it, but endured this ignorant ill-bred curiosity patiently; and it must be owned that within their deformity they were beautifully formed, with fine lines. But, like most elderly gentlemen, he disliked—nay, loathed—the little low street boys. With such creatures anything eccentric or deformed becomes a subject for jeers, flouts, and gibes. No sooner did he appear round the corner than these imps would burst into a horse-laugh, and cries of “My high!” “There’s legs!” “Pair o’ tongs!” “Now, Old Splayfeet!” with other coarse speeches, which he bore with indifference, only


going round—in vulgar phrase, giving them a wide berth. It was believed by the neighbours that some of these wretches threw stones at him. This sharpened and even soured his temper, and latterly, if he had reason to suspect one of these street pests, I have known him to rush at him and inflict chastisement, in anticipation as it were. The coarse scoff from the ignorant and vacant mind of the day labourer—who should have known better, though I hold him far lower in the scale than Toby—greeted him as he went by: “Law, there’s a dawg!” “He’s wore down his legs!” or “There’s legs!” “Look at ’is ’ead!” whereby it is to be noted that want of grammar and scurrility go together. He passed these critics, however, with the contempt of indifference. No doubt he was as content with, nay, as proud of, his legs, as Narcissus was of his. A hansom cabman, as our unoffending Toby was jogging his way home one day, out of pure malice made a cut at him with his long whip. I would I had seen the varlet! Since that day he always strangely crouched when one of these vehicles was passing.

What a sagacious, reserved fellow he was! He kept strangers at a distance; no amount of endearments, offers at patting, or "Poor fellows!" would persuade him to let the intruder's hand get near his chain-collar. He had profited by lessons of wisdom; he was eminently a wise dog; and thus saved himself from the dog "picker and stealer," or the "Dog's Home." In our district live many large dogs, collies and others, and I note it is a pleasant custom for the little newsboys and others, in their rounds, to take these canine acquaintances a short walk, the honest beasts taking care not to go too far. But our Toby resisted their advances; he would have nothing whatever to do with them. So he set his face, or snout, against the practice.

In a tolerably wide circle of friends I gave the late Toby a place, as a matter of course. In his way he was true, consistent, faithful as the best; far more even-tempered, good-natured, and grateful than the worst. A more worthy, sensible, generally amiable member of society did not exist; his long, dark, wise face, with the fine eyes, being always turned with a calm searching look to


read your wishes. If we went by bark or hostile bearing, a more ferocious beast had never been shot by outraged keeper. There was high comedy for those in the secret, in the appalled look of children and matrons, as he drew near gaily with courteous purpose of being agreeable, and who greeted him with the offensive remark, "Odious brute!" He did not care nor did he cry, but wagged his switch-like tail. Certainly his appearance was alarming: a long rat-like trunk propped on his alligator-like—paws, we can hardly call them; they rather suggested the strange things that support the turtle.

He fluctuated between St. Giles and St. James: between the kitchen and the study. He liked company and detested solitude. Whenever the person whom convention calls his master rang at the door, eager pattering was heard, and our Toby, stretched at full length before the genial blaze of the kitchen-fire, would give himself the rousing shake, and post up as if fearful of being late for his appointment. There was always something pleasant in his honest greeting, which was not



fawning, but business-like and to the point ; for, having come to the door, he would turn sharply aside into the study, where there was another fire, and where he would reside until his master went out, when he would again descend. This fluctuation gave an agreeable variety to his life. As the hours for the menial meals drew on, his bearing was marked by a restlessness, which increased, if the door was closed, to rather undignified demonstrations, piteous complaints, and even howls until the way was cleared, when he galloped below with the eagerness shown in a man-of-war when all hands are piped to the grog-tubs. In this only instance did he ever forget his native gravity ; but when, like Justice Greedy in the play, there's a clapper in one's interior ringing clamorously for dinner, we are all the same. Yet with this unmistakable taste for good society, and with his declared regard for the person who owned him, it was mortifying to find that the person who really had his affection—idolatry almost—was one of low birth and associations : a footman, in short—exactly as in the case of Jack. This man's step he


knew, his mode even of opening the gate ; for in a second he was on his legs, his ears cocked, his nostrils scenting, straining even, to catch the certainty of what he suspected—that a walk was in hand, and he was baulked ! Then came heart-broken yells of despair and pain, as though fire were raging round him—so agonizing, in short, that he had to be enlarged, and with an unerring scent would set off in pursuit, shrieking all the way, to the amazement of bystanders, mistrustful whether they should raise the cry, “ Mad dog ! ” The movements of this man, too, he followed when laying the table, or what is called “ taking away,” with an affectionate, reverential admiration, sometimes thumping his tail on the ground, as who should say, “ How grandly he does it ! ” He was evidently the greatest being he knew. I was equally evidently, in his eyes, a well-meaning, respectable being, but without the force of character of the footman. He showed this view not indelicately, but still plainly enough. I had once or twice taken him a long walk in the rain, whence he returned drenched literally to the skin and



rather footsore. From that day he registered an oath that he would not be so taken in again. Accordingly on a proposed walk the crafty fellow would come forth with a feigned alacrity, but without any of the hysteric yells with which he complimented the footman, and give a few complimentary ambles, as I found, to throw me off my guard. But a street or two away he was gone, and by making haste round the corner might be seen cantering home as if the—well, a boy were at his tail! Should you have been prompt enough to catch him almost in the fact, as he was decamping, his mode was to stand far out in the middle of the road, gazing with a well-assumed pretence of not knowing what was intended—something unreasonable, no doubt. If you made as though you would capture him, he retired to a safer place, when he turned again and expostulated. Only in a morning pre-breakfast walk would he condescend to go a portion of the road, say down Eccleston Square and the street—Gillingham, is it?—which tends to the Victoria Station. Out of the said Gillingham runs a sort of cross road which leads

towards the square yclept Warwick, and so, as the music-hall song has it, "the back-way round" home. Here he invariably turned off, and from custom this compromise had grown up and was honourably observed on both sides. He thus secured a variety of walk and a pleasant change. He had, indeed, stores of topographical knowledge, and, I believe, would have found his way back from any part of London on this side of Oxford Street. Once get him to Charing Cross, and he was all right. The Thames Embankment, too, was another landmark, and there, too, again he was all right.

Every one knew Toby. Men going to their work addressed him by name ; and in the street which he passed through every morning on his short cut home he was regarded with as much surprise as interest—as, indeed, something mysterious. No doubt it was often speculated what on earth brought the black, long-backed, long-nosed, short-legged dog at that particular time, who did not dally (for he knew the boys), and was unattended. At the family butcher's, too, he was well known,





and there his larcenous passions were connived at. Knowing, however, that the men of cleaverous tastes are quick to resentment, he never entered the shop boldly by the front, but crept in by the flank under the chopping-block, and so made the tour of the place, certain to secure, unobserved, something valuable. At one time he had a piece of horse-play, or dog-play, of humorously biting strangers' trousers, and where what was beneath went free, as sailors say, and was abundant, he didn't much care if his jaws closed upon that too. A claimant had to be soothed and indemnified for a torn trowser and scraped flesh by the moderate sum of half a sovereign. It was felt he should be cured of this expensive taste, and cured he was by his friend the footman. But his affection, strange to say, became even more extravagant. Indeed, the footman's bearing to him was rather gruff, certainly indifferent, a kind of "don't bother me" air. But it was all one to his admirer.

Such, then, was Toby—Toby Turnspit—who departed full of years—ten, I think. He suc-

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cumbed to the late frosts, from some bronchial attack, combined with a swelling in his head. To the last he proved himself the same amiable, respectable, and respected creature he had been all through, giving no trouble, lying coiled up in his hutch by the kitchen fire. Even a few hours before his death, he showed his sense of kind words, "Poor Toby!" "Poor old dog!" or friendly pat, by grateful wagging of his tail. He passed away in the night. As I said before, we could well have spared a better dog, and I am sure that there are residing in our neighbourhood human characters of not half his merit.

## CHAPTER XIX.

## AT THE MUSEUM READING-ROOM.

ONE of my favourite haunts, and also one of the genuine "sights" in the metropolis, and the one most certain to please and astonish strangers, is the great Reading Rotunda, devised by the clever Italian director whose bust looks down from over the entrance door. The visitor suddenly introduced can hardly conceal his wonder and gratification as he gazes round at the enormous chamber, so lofty, airy, and vast; so still, and yet so crowded; so comfortable and warm, like any private library. The decoration, too, is most suitable: the books, which line it all round to a height of some forty or fifty feet, make excellent well-toned bits of colouring; while the ribs of the huge circular roof converging to a centre, and

covered with painted cloth, have by time displayed their outlines on that material, and unintentionally added a not ineffective detail. In the centre is seen the raised circular enclosure, where the officials and directors sit and carry on the business of the room, commanding a good and perfect view of all that goes on; while from it radiate the desks, where readers or writers—for there are far more of the latter than of the former—sit and work. Many are walking about; many standing at the shelves and consulting the reference volumes; many are conversing; while the attendants are hurrying to and fro, carrying the ordered volumes to the proper desk. There are small waggons, laden with a dozen unwieldy volumes of the *Times*, which a truly hungry reader is trundling to his seat, yet without the least noise, for the wheels are cased with india-rubber. This rapacious individual is a type of a large class from whom the nation and readers suffer. The searching a single volume of his *Times* might absorb a morning or mornings, but, with the true rapaciousness of a *helluo librorum*,

he wishes to have all at his hand, though he cannot use them. His fellow of the same kidney will write up for a dozen or more octavos, and rear around him whole fortifications of volumes which he will never glance at—but it is a sort of ownership for the time.

The reader's desk is almost too luxurious. Nothing more complete or thoughtfully devised could be conceived. There is a choice of three kinds of chairs : stuffed leathern, cane-bottomed, or highly polished mahogany ; so the most *difficile* as to this nice matter may suit themselves. The constant student and diligent author should choose the second ; they will thank me for this valuable and precious hint, given by the late Mr. Dickens, and enforced solemnly from his own experience.

The height of the desk is carefully calculated. Below, there is a place for “stowing away” the hat ; in front, to the right, the reader lets down a small padded shelf, on which he can put away his books for consultation ; to the left, a book-stand comes out, ingeniously contrived to move in any

direction on a swivel or axis, to rise or fall at any angle, with a rack. In the centre is an inkstand, with a steel pen and two quills; there is also a paper-cutter, a blotting-pad, and a heavy press-weight to keep the book open. Surely this is all *de luxe*, and many a scribbling being is not nearly so well provided at home.

The ticket on which the description of the work wanted is written is of this pattern :—

Permission to use the Reading-Room will be withdrawn from any person who shall write or make marks on any part of a printed book, manuscript, or map belonging to the Museum.

| Press Mark. | Name of Author, or other<br>Heading of Work wanted. | Place. | Date. | Size. |
|-------------|---|--------|-------|-------|
|             | Title. _____  |        |       |       |

Date) \_\_\_\_\_ (Signature).

\_\_\_\_\_ (Number of the Reader's Seat).

Please to restore each Volume of the Catalogue to its place, as soon as done with.

On the other side are the following directions :—

“Readers are *particularly* required—1. Not to ask for more than *one work* on the same ticket. 2. To transcribe from the Catalogues all the particulars necessary for the identification of the Work wanted. 3. To write in a plain, clear hand, in order to avoid delay and mistakes. 4. To indicate in the proper place on each ticket the number of the seat occupied. 5. To bear in mind that no Books will be left at the seat indicated on the ticket unless the Reader who asks for them is there to receive them. 6. When any cause for complaint arises, to apply at once to the Superintendent of the Reading-Room. 7. Before leaving the Room, to return each Book, or set of Books, to an attendant at the centre counter, and obtain the corresponding ticket, the READER BEING RESPONSIBLE FOR THE BOOKS SO LONG AS THE TICKET REMAINS UNCANCELLED. 8. To replace on the shelves of the Reading-Room, as soon as done with, such Books of Reference as they may have had occasion to remove for the purpose of

consultation. N.B.—Readers are not, under any circumstances, to take a Book, MS., or Map out of the Reading-Room.”

These slips are used profusely and by wanton readers with the most reckless waste. The amount consumed in a day must be enormous. Numbers are wasted or torn up ; many are convenient for making notes on, and thus save the expense of paper. Many readers copy out a vast number of entries from the catalogues on these slips, which they mean to use at some future period. In short, the consumption of paper by the end of a year—and each slip is on paper of fine quality and nearly the size of half a sheet of “note”—must be enormous and represent a considerable sum. It more or less encourages the useless, vacant reader, who delights in filling up as many as he can. A reform might certainly be made here, analogous to that in the Money Order Office, when the little simple slips now in use were substituted for the old complicated and larger ones. A small scrap of the size of such a Post Office form, leaving out the directions, which are



never read, would make everything shorter and clearer. A piece of paper three inches by two, ruled in three divisions, would serve.

|                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Press Mark.                    |  |
| Name of Book, Date, etc.       |  |
| Name of Reader.                |  |
| Number of his Desk, Date, etc. |  |

Further, there are little handy book-cases standing apart, filled with reference indexes to reviews and magazines—with that wonderful one to the *Times*, which the industrious Samuel Palmer slaves at untiringly, working his way at double tides, backwards as well as forwards, through the old as well as through the current numbers. I have noticed this patient workman and his assistants at their drudging but useful work.

The next step is to consult the catalogue—a library in itself, whose folios are disposed on two deep shelves near the ground, and fitted into the circular enclosure or table which forms the central

ring. Here is the whole alphabet, as found disposed in nearly six hundred MS. folio volumes, bound in whole purple calf, and yet being perpetually re-bound, the corners being tipped with metal to protect them against wear and tear. But these wonderful volumes have a strange power of expanding, that must be the despair of the binders, save that they are well accustomed to the routine. Never was the system of guards so drawn upon ; at almost every page these are found. At the close of each day one is sure to encounter assistants carrying off a number of the ponderous volumes for this revision ; for by the end of each day a vast number of new titles have been written out in the neat museum round-hand, and duly lithographed on slips ; and these have to be fitted in in their *proper* place, mark ! that is, in their strict alphabetical hierarchy. Thus, for the new novel by Meddle there is but the one fitting place, say between Mecca and Meddlcott, which two titles, however, may be squeezed close together, and, as if in the crowded row of a pit, cannot "move down." A new sheet has therefore to be

introduced and fitted to the guard, and the entries moved on. When the "guards" have been filled and the volume begins to bulge, it is taken to pieces and re-bound, or divided into two. By the new system of printed entries the space taken up is far less, and the necessity for shifting is much reduced. It should have been mentioned that all the titles of the new books as they come out are duly printed in volumes, which are placed in stands for reference; and the type being kept standing, these are used for the entries. But, indeed, catalogue arrangement is an art in itself, as can be seen from the Parliamentary report on the subject. No one can conceive the difficulties of classification, cross-references, etc. Another perplexing matter is to find a system of letters and numbers for noting each volume, that should not be exhaustible nor too cumbrous.

A careful examination of the catalogue would of itself result in many curiosities. The authors rejoicing in the name of SMITH fill three or four of the folio volumes. The "*John Smiths*" fill many bewildering pages, which you must go

through before finding your own John Smith ; but even here our compilers give every shred that may distinguish, and they will mark him conspicuously as a divine, "D.D.," or even of "Stoke Pogis," if he have written a respectable number of volumes. A popular or classical writer fills half a volume, or innumerable pages, as the case may be. Thus with Sir Richard Steele, and particularly Boswell's Johnson, or Milton. England has a couple of volumes to itself, in which we find all the kings in their order, and all that concerns each. So with France. Periodical publications, "P. P." in the notation, have quite a catalogue of their own. All these and more are here found gathered together to the number of some twenty volumes or so. They are ordered alphabetically according to cities—Antwerp, Berlin, Calcutta, etc. ; the Antwerp magazines and journals being again put alphabetically. To help those who know a magazine by its name but not its country, a general index in some fresh set of volumes is given. London, however, has a set of volumes to itself. Newspapers are not catalogued under numbers or

letters, but it is enough to write the name of the paper wanted. Shakespeare, it may be conceived, has a large amount of space to himself, though, indeed, this is scarcely a mark of merit, as there are many industrious editors and bookmakers who stand this test even better. It was stated the other day in a literary journal, as evidence of claims of this description, that the works of the late veteran novelist, Harrison Ainsworth, "filled forty pages of the Museum catalogue."


There is, besides, what is known as the "Old Museum Catalogue," in about fifty volumes ; which is formed of a printed catalogue made more than half a century ago, and supplemented by MS. entries. There is some awkwardness in this double accommodation, as some works are enrolled in one which are not in the other. The entries are in old and indifferent penmanship, squeezed in at every space and corner ; but in its day, like Mercutio's wound, it "served." It suggests the catalogue of the fine library at a certain university, where, by a strange economy, a Bodleian catalogue thus supplemented, and with due erasures and additions, is made to do duty as the authorized list.

There is also a wonderful music catalogue, extending to some thirty or forty folio volumes, and a marvellous so-called "catalogue" of the prints, which has now reached to four or five volumes, arranged chronologically. It is, in truth, an elaborate treatise, explaining fully the subject of every plate—often, as in the case of Hogarth, enigmatical enough—showing the meaning of each figure, and quoting from contemporary writers: a wonderful monument, in short, of patient industry. In addition, there are "Publishers' Circulars" for forty or fifty years back, and two big volumes of a "Newspaper Index." In this land of catalogues, we of course meet those of the "MSS." There are some half a dozen printed volumes, and some in MS. Of these the most curious are Mr. Cole's, an old antiquary of the last century, who in beautiful handwriting, black, clear as print, and upright, made diligent "collections," copying every curious inscription, letter, and bit of poetry, what not. These he illustrated with rude but truly effective pen-and-ink sketches. For himself he drew up these wonderful indexes. His eyes and


his industry must have been equally valuable to him. There is even a catalogue for the Persian MSS. In short, every help is provided.

The next operation is to obtain the book. In the room itself, on the shelves within helping reach, is disposed a very fine library, of a rather unique kind, for it consists of what may be called consultation books; everything that will furnish general information on any subject—such as law, medicine, languages, science, history. For each department there are the standard works on each, all brought together; all the Histories of England—Freeman, Green, Froude, Lingard, Hume, Walpole; all the Calendars of State Papers, Parliamentary Reports, etc. So with French and German. The collection of Encyclopædias, it may be conceived, is extraordinary, for here are all the foreign as well as English, to the great “Dictionary of Conversation;” Peerages without number; Directories, Almanacs of all the leading countries, journals like *Notes and Queries* and the *Gentleman's Magazine*, your true “bookmaker's” friends.

Having found his work, our reader fills up his



ticket, leaves it in a little open basket with a number of others, whence it is presently carried off. It then goes on its travels, sometimes afar off, through vast chambers and corridors, up flights of stairs, iron and stone, perhaps for a quarter of a mile, for thus far the shelves ramble away: thence to return to the wedge-shaped enclosure in the great room, where the assistants copy the particulars into their books. When thus "controlled," the ticket is placed between the leaves, the assistant in the room takes it to the reader's desk, and brings away the ticket to the central desk, where it is deposited in a little zinc compartment alphabetically labelled. The time consumed in this process should not be more than ten minutes or a quarter of an hour. Formerly half an hour and longer was the time a book had to be waited for; but the real cause of any delay is the waiting its turn, as there are so many to be served. When the reader has finished with his book, and would restore it, he goes to the desk, hands in his book, and receives back his ticket. Till this receipt is given, he is held accountable. The men within






then check off their entries by the books, which are once more in their possession. Thus much for the catalogue.

The Museum reader is a special type. Certainly three-fourths are genuine workers—bookmakers, copyists. One is amazed at the hodman-like patience and diligence shown—especially in the wearisome duty of collating, carried on with an unflinching conscientiousness by some wizened Dryasdust, who comes week after week, and goes through the great folio line by line. There are fair “damozels,” who work like any copying-clerks, and whose appearance is antagonistic to their drudgery. They have a volume of old letters before them, which they copy out fair for some literary man who has cash and position. Then there are families of copyists—husband, wife, and daughter. As any one engaged in literary work well knows, that copying—on any serious scale—is a costly business, though it is reasonable for the executant; while the writing is beautifully neat and clear, it spreads out to an alarming extent. Copying, indeed, does not pay, save in the case of

MSS. otherwise not procurable. The literary man even at his desk, with text-book from which he is quoting, though it be a passage of only a dozen lines, will find it far cheaper to sacrifice the printed book, cut out the bit and paste it in, than to spend a quarter of an hour writing it out. I have known many literary men whose books are cut up in this fashion. The wise and knowing take care to purchase some damaged copy for the special purpose. Many, however, hold it profane to cut and slash a book in this style—holding that you are taking its life—there being but a certain number of that edition in the world.

Every year the crowd of readers increases, while the Reading-Room, in spite of rearrangement, remains pretty much the same after twenty years or so. When all the scholars of the new schools and universities are in full work, the pressure will become serious. Yet there never can be found any real remedy ; and no room, of whatever size, could be found sufficient to hold the “readers of the nation.” The theory, it seems to me, is a false one, that every reader in the kingdom is entitled to




find luxurious accommodation, attendance, pen and ink, with books which he wears out in the reading as though they were his own. The utmost the State can do is to entertain the eye. That causes no wear and tear, and needs little accommodation. Pictures, museums, prints, statues, are all legitimate. These are manageable, and may be seen by thousands. But to supply servants to fetch and carry for hundreds, and to wait on them, hunt up for them, aid them in their researches, bind books for them—all this service, in the case of thousands of persons, must soon break down. We might as well have State workshops. The theory is therefore an unsound one ; and if carried out, it is at least the right of the nation to limit it as it pleases.

It may choose to confer the favour on those who have some claim to it, and, instead of a Reading-Room, make it a "Student's Room,"—that is, for those who have work or business to do : a matter that should be regularly guaranteed. Even in their case, there should be a limit to the large number of volumes that rapacity requires to have around it. This should not be tolerated, save for special

cause shown. It might be urged that all novel and poetry readers might content themselves with what is found on the shelves of the room ; but this would not serve the demand, there being only one or two copies kept. The reform should extend to the limitation of persons as well as to that of the use of books. As regards the latter, the serious objection lies in the physical exertion necessary in bringing great volumes, and collections of great volumes, to the reader's desk. The idea, indeed, is that the reader should go to the books, and not the books go to him ; and the fact that great folios have to be borne on carriages many hundred yards away, and brought back again, must add seriously to the wear and tear. The first principle, therefore, is to limit this transport. As already pointed out, it seems ridiculous to find a small waggon laden with a dozen volumes of the *Times* rolling on its way to a reader's desk, all for the benefit of some attorney's clerk who is looking for a birth, death, or marriage. It is clear that the time and physical labour involved in this process is not what the nation should pay for. Here is the true principle

—for all newspapers, magazines, reviews, and “P. P.” generally, there should be one great room, to which those who wish to consult such works should be admitted, and there help themselves. It is astonishing what an amount of labour and attendance this would at once abridge. This, with the reform as to the number of books called for, would lighten the labours of the attendants to an extraordinary degree. I fancy much aid could be gained by a development of the Consultation Library actually in the room. This could be vastly extended by taking in additional shelves, abolishing many of the technical works on medicine and such subjects, and adding others on general literature.


There are a few desks set apart, like compartments in a railway train, “for ladies only,” and one of the standing jests of the place—perfectly supported, too, by experience—is that these are left solitary and untenanted. There are some curious contrasts: some ancient shrivelled dame, imprinting delicate pot-hooks and hangers on official paper, while a fair and fresh young



creature is seen grappling earnestly and laboriously with some mouldy and illegible MS. There are strange old ladies to be seen, somewhat shrunk and withered, for whom the place seems to have an attraction that will be strong even to death. A more piteous sight still is the decayed "hack"—ill-fed, ill-kept, in a state of decay, and who has some little "job" with which to "keep body and soul together."

Now, I believe, books are seldom stolen ; indeed, a Museum book is so ingeniously stamped on the title-page and on certain pages that it becomes worthless for other purposes, and cannot be offered for sale without certain detection. Every print in every volume is thus stamped—it may be conceived what a labour this must be, in these days of copious illustrations. Without this precaution, they would to a certainty be cut out.

The work of all this machinery is helped by the unwearied, never-flagging, never-failing courtesy of the officials—notably of Mr. R. Garnett and Mr. Anderson—who aid with their knowledge the anxious, troublesome, and often unreasonable



inquirers. There is a class of querulous beings who delight in convicting the establishment of deficiencies. Their joy is to discover that some book "is not in the library," or, better still, "not to be found, or misdescribed, in the catalogue." They go triumphantly to the chief official with their mare's-nest, and wait calmly while he, with patience and good humour, sends for the proper volume, and, running his fingers down the entries, at last points to it, duly registered in its proper place. There is sometimes show of plausibility in the complaint, or in the positive declarations of the claimant "that he has had the book in his hand," that "it is in every other library;" and the chiefs grow a little nervous. A long search has to be made: assistants are sent on exploring expeditions in many directions, and at last it is discovered that there is no such work, or that it is by another author or on another subject, and that the careless inquirer is, as usual, wrong!

From a long experience, it may be asserted that in almost every instance the presumptuous fault-

finder is himself in fault. A common specimen of carelessness is presented in the filling-up of forms for works that are actually "in the room," only a few yards away from the writer's desk. Sometimes, indeed, a book may have been put back out of its place, or a pamphlet of a few leaves, bound up with a score of others in a volume—the volume itself one of many scores—may have been overlooked or wrongly described. But, after due search and some delay, it is to a certainty recovered and placed before the impatient student, who glances at it carelessly, and finds it was not so important now that it is found. "So you see, sir," said, on an occasion of the kind, Dr. Johnson, "when it was lost, it was of immense consequence; and when found, it was no matter at all."

Such is the best specimen in the world of "Reading made easy;" by every kind of convenience and unbounded courtesy extended with prodigality even to the working literary man, as no one so well as the present writer can testify.




## CHAPTER XX.

## MODERN PRINTING.

WITH all the abundance of printing and printers in England, I confess even the more important handsome works, brought out by the great houses, do not satisfy the critical taste. There is something wrong and inartistic about the page and its arrangement. This is owing, I believe, to the wish to fit every work into one or two volumes, no matter what its size, which is done by using smaller type and closer lines. Now, this is as though architects were bound down to the same-sized façade for every house, no matter how many stories and rooms were required. The result of this treatment is a meanness and poverty in the look of the page. The treatment by the old printers was more artistic. If they had to crowd


their page, they used a larger and more brilliant type, and brought the lines closer together, so as to avoid that open, straggling look which is now seen in many cases. Even in the great old folios, where each page contains a dozen small ones, all is clear, brilliant, and handsome. English type also seems to be cut too fine; the impression is not black enough; and it must be said generally that printing is not nearly so good as it was fifty years ago, or at the beginning of the century.

This matter of the proportion of the size of the letter to the pages will be understood from the case of French binding, which is so superior; much of the harmonious effect, apart from the workmanship, being owing to the lettering on the back, and ornamentation nicely adjusted to the space, as though it were designed for the place. If we take any of the standard works—Macaulay's History and Essays, for instance—such as we see them in the regular libraries, we shall note this unsatisfactory treatment as we open the page. The printing seems faint and scattered, the paper thin, the title-page




unimportant. It is quite different with the sober, substantial look of older volumes. Comparing these with the important French works issued by Plon and Dentu in large octavo, one is struck by the contrary qualities. These are truly handsome. Talking with the foreman of one of our most eminent printing-houses, a perfect factory, filling a whole street, and which was then engaged in bringing out an English version of a magnificent Bible, he spoke contemptuously, or, rather, with quite a superior air, of his French rivals. "Bless you, sir, we could beat 'em to nothing. This is child's play for us. We could send a dozen such through the machines in a month." I urged how beautiful, how delicate, was the printing, etc. He answered, "We don't want it. It's only wasting time. We give good, sound *English* work." The two quartos were accordingly produced, *clichés* of the engravings, borders, etc., being used, the Protestant version in English substituted. Never was there such a contrast. That Bible, as is well known, is a matchless book, and, at

this moment, fetches double the original price. It is regularly *designed*. Binding, size of page, type, paper—everything is in harmony. The full-page engravings, having a rich, old tapestry sort of detail, are not matched on the opposite page by a staring white expanse, and scattered open lines of printing—a harsh discordance; but an effect is aimed at. There is a mellow-blended tone. But when I saw our English copy, what a difference! A type large and open, clear enough certainly, was selected, thoroughly *English*; a bright, coarse, staring paper, instead of the elegant, *satiny* surface of the other; the whole honestly printed, and “run through the machine,” as our friend had boasted. It was painful to look at for a nice eye. As Lamb said of the modern editors of Burton’s “Anatomy,” “nothing more heartless” could be conceived. The French book, it is needless to say, was not “run through” the machine, though printed by it; each sheet being a careful special effort, done as delicately as possible. This instance I merely give as an illustration.



I have mentioned already how the strange charm of "getting your proofs" never palls, till the last hour. I have often seen (and been amused at) an eminent literary man presiding at his own table, guests about him, etc., much distracted by the arrival of the night's post with proofs. He would look wistfully and eagerly, until at last, no longer to be restrained, he had opened and given the pages the fond, eager greeting of a father. I sympathized with him. The first glance at your own words and sentences, before merely inchoate and imperfect (Charles Lamb says, "All things *look raw* to me in MS."), is a delight. You are pleased with your sentences. At the same time, it is to be owned that, once the book appears, you have not the same liking or enthusiasm. You hate your offspring after their formal birth, and could take a pen, go over and alter every sentence. This friend of mine was very nice and dainty about his proofs, and did not like to have them crushed and bundled in the post. When a book of his was printing, he always had a little portfolio, or cover, with strings,



the inside of which had one direction, his own, the outside the printers'. Hence it passed backwards and forwards, and the sheets arrived flat and nice and comfortable.


In the same spirit I delight in, and reverence too, the great printing-offices, with their hurry and clatter, and the intelligent foreman who keeps all going so wonderfully. It is an exciting thing, when you are book-printing against time, to go in and see the process—the work perhaps not quite finished, the men hurrying up to you with rapid strides. In this case I was once told "*there were seventeen men on me!*"—forty feeding like one, busy as bees. It was something to see the pile of "copy" melting rapidly away every instant; the "click-click" of the setting of type heard close by; the men coming in for fresh "takes" every minute. It was rather a trying moment, during this crisis, when the word was passed that, on a second "casting-off," as it is called, or measurement, it was found that there was about two hundred pages too much. The matter was pressing, for the "seventeen" could not be checked

a moment in their "onward wild career" without serious pecuniary loss, they being bound to their work from the beginning to the end. One had to sit down on the instant and make the excisions boldly and firmly, though fluttered at having the very "folios" of "copy" taken away out of your hand. By an hour's desperate exertion I gained on my seventeen competitors, got away with the rest home—it was evening—under solemn pledge to have the "copy" back before the men came to work in the morning. But I had to work half the night. Yet that book, so hastily and uncere- moniously despatched, gained enormously by these amputations. Within a fortnight of publication the whole edition was sold.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### OLD BOOKSELLERS AND THEIR HOBBIES.

THE refinements, hobbies, "fads," etc., connected with books are not one whit behind the manias for blue china, Queen Anne furniture, lace, and the rest. Paris is the place for these fancies, and a number of enterprising publishers are ceaselessly busy pouring out streams of hot-pressed, daintily printed little volumes, issued, like the proofs of a print, in stages or classes, and carefully numbered. Some are "pulled" on Chinese paper; some on "papier Whatman," which seems to be in high favour in France. These exquisite little works are pieces of art—the printing, the ink, the size of the type, everything being directed by artistic proportion. In short, these French works are almost perfect, and when bound artistically are






worthy of a casket. Sometimes, in reprints of old works of the last century, the original plates of etchings by Eisen, Marillier, and other "little masters," have been discovered, and are united to the modern text and paper with exquisite art. The prices, too, for these gems are extravagant to a degree, and the collector who would secure choice copies of *Manon Lescaut*, and the whole series of little romances, poems, etc., must have a long and deep purse indeed.

Another mania of the elegant collector is that of huge works, with etchings and other illustrations, such as *L'Art*, the *Gazette des Beaux Arts*; which, as they all admit of "stages" and "states," open up bibliomaniac gambling, gradual rise in price, and the rest of it. But it is certainly overdone, and no purse could keep pace with the overflowing supply. Here our neighbours are not only far ahead of us, but literally alone. Their wonderful fancy almost runs riot. Paris, it must be recollected, is the artistic capital, not of France only, but of Europe, and the art publisher there is equally publisher at Berlin, Vienna, and other

capitals. But these, after all, are not the immediate subject of our consideration, which is yet another "fad," and which has really more sound sense and reason than many of the leading "fads" of the time.

This is the old-fashioned practice of what is called "illustrating" some favourite work by portraits and pictures of every person and subject that is alluded to in the work, a pursuit that in the case of a very favourite pet-book offers a sort of fascination, and may be carried on for years without much damage to pocket or serious pursuits. The result is extremely interesting, and even valuable—that is, when taste, judgment, and experience are brought to the task. But even under rude conditions a very favourable and profitable result may be secured, for the principle is really good and genuine.

Let us take the case of so well known a work as Boswell's "Life of Johnson," which is a very suitable one for the purpose, and which the print-sellers are more often employed to thus adorn than any other. Its merit is, of course, the vast



number of personages, living and dead, towns, countries, and events alluded to in it, and the inexhaustible variety offered of treatment. Let us follow the process.


The first step will be to secure, say, the large quarto edition in two volumes, which will be put into the hands of a professional person to inlay—that is, to insert each leaf in a large margin; a very nice and delicate process, done in a hot-press; the edges being first given “a feather-edge”—that is, fined down to about half their thickness, so that the joinings shall offer no “ridge.” This converts the book into large, handsome volumes, so that prints of great size can be used. The first edition of the “Tour to the Hebrides” should be also secured and similarly treated. Next begins the hunt for prints, and not only for prints, but for play-bills, advertisements, old newspapers, autograph letters, water-colour drawings, and so on.

Johnson himself is of the chief importance, and portraits of him in every shape and size must and can be gathered together. The interest of this

will be seen from the fact that each will represent him at a different period of his life, when young, middle-aged, old, etc. ; these being judiciously distributed through the volumes at the proper eras. The same with Boswell. And as each print is dated; the whole arrangement has a sort of historical merit, and the comparison and progress becomes highly interesting and curious. So with views of towns like Lichfield, which must be selected as they appeared at the date mentioned. There is mention of Mr. Green's museum in that town: and there are curious prints to be had of it. So with Temple Bar, and the heads stuck upon it, of which there are also prints. So with the old portions of London now pulled down, like Butcher's Row, near Temple Bar, where Johnson met his old friend Edwards; the taverns in Fleet Street; the King's Library, etc. Then the advertisement put out by Johnson of his school at Edial in the *Gentlemen's Magazine* must be hunted up and inlaid, as must be all these various prints, whatever their size; the playbill for the very night of Mrs. Abington's benefit, when Johnson attended

in state ; a copy of the catalogue of his books ; views of Drury Lane Theatre as it appeared then ; of Garrick as Archer in "The Beaux' Stratagem," and other characters alluded to in the work ; of the scenes at Ranelagh Gardens, at Vauxhall, and the Pantheon ; and thus will be gradually formed a perfect panorama of the manners, customs, and appearance of the various persons and the places they frequented. The portraits, indeed, if of fine execution, good mezzotints, or coloured in red chalk, like the old graceful Bartolozzi drawings, will be the chief adornment.

When all is tolerably complete, the book, now swollen to five or six times its original bulk, must be divided into portions, each portion becoming a volume. Next title-pages are specially printed, with Vol. I., Vol. II., etc., and the whole may be bound temporarily in boards, which will admit of further additions ; but it is generally handed over to Riviere, or some master, and sumptuously and stoutly bound. The effect of turning over the pages is sometimes dazzling, and no modern illustrated book can compete with it. All these little




loose prints and scraps that have floated down to us on the surface of the waters, escaping destruction so wonderfully, belong to their age, and are insignificant ; but fixed in their place, and part of a collection, they become full of meaning. In the market such works, when directed by taste and labour, are worth great prices ; and, indeed, there is a great and special value in them.

Works like "The Romance of the English Stage," with about one hundred poor magazine portraits of actors and actresses, bound up, we find priced in catalogues at from sixteen to twenty guineas ; but the sums asked and given for really great works, chiefly by opulent Americans, are of vast amount. Not many years ago Mr. Harvey, the well-known collector in St. James's Street, received a commission from a gentleman to illustrate Boswell without limit of expense, with the result that it became stored with autograph letters of all the leading personages, original water-colour portraits, and proofs before letters ; the sum given amounting to over two thousand pounds. Mr. Harvey, indeed, stands at the head

of the professors of this system, and has brought it to the dignity of an art. He knows what choice things really are, and to pass his windows daily might be turned to profit, as a sort of education. Here one might at least learn what ignorance is shown in the sneers about "proofs" and different "states," but which really almost signify different prints, so totally opposite is a really brilliant impression to a poor one. Forster's "Goldsmith" has been similarly treated, as also Brayley's "London Theatres," Smith's "Book for a Rainy Day," Nolleken's "Life and Times."

It will be thought, perhaps, that this pastime will be beyond the reach of modest purses; but such is not the case. The present writer is now illustrating his Boswell, and has succeeded in getting together some four or five hundred interesting prints, all of the last century, at prices, on an average, from fourpence to a shilling. When complete probably twenty pounds will cover the whole. Of course, this does not represent outlay in the shape of time and knowledge, in exploring old portfolios and out-of-the-way bookstalls. In




the curious old "wynds" of Bloomsbury, hard by to Red Lion Square, and also in Long Acre, and thereabouts, are little dark shops devoted to scraps and prints, and here you find professors of the art, strange, well-informed beings, who spend their days and nights "snipping" up and trimming old prints, and putting them away in boxes like those in a haberdasher's shop—each according to a subject; so that if you asked for "owls," a collection would be brought forward. I wot of one with whom I used to have many a talk on that subject, and who has the most wonderful collection of Cruikshank's engravings, which he cannot bring himself to part with. You enter and find him in his shirt-sleeves, busy "laying down" or snipping away. He knows your taste, and the subject on whose trail you are, and by each visit has secured and put aside a few "cur'osities." "I have got you," he will tell you, "the view of Johnson's house at Lichfield. Here is the set of three, of Vauxhall Gardens. Here is Garrick delivering the ode at the Stratford Jubilee," etc. In these boxes are treasures, choice mezzotints by M'Ardle and



Smith, at choice prices; and yet at the very moderate sums of a shilling and half a crown some dainty little copperplates of Mrs. Abington and Mrs. Hartley.

There are legends in the business of some prodigious efforts in this direction. The most remarkable and gigantic was the copy of Pennant's "History of London," which was bequeathed to the British Museum by Mr. Crowle, and cost that gentleman seven thousand pounds; and the "Illustrated Clarendon and Burnet," formed by the late Mr. Sutherland of Gower Street, and continued by his widow, who has munificently presented it to the Bodleian Library, cost upwards of twelve thousand pounds. This, perhaps the richest pictorial history which exists, or is likely to exist, deserves more than a passing notice. It contains nearly nineteen thousand prints and drawings. There are seven hundred and thirty-one portraits of Charles the First, five hundred and eighteen of Charles the Second, three hundred and fifty-two of Cromwell, two hundred and seventy-three of James the Second, and four hundred and twenty of William



the Third. The collection fills sixty-seven large volumes. Forty years were spent in this pursuit. The catalogue of the illustrations, of which a few copies only were printed for distribution as presents by Mrs. Sutherland, fills two large quarto volumes. There are copies of Byron's works and Scott's works, each illustrated with many thousands of prints and drawings, each increasing almost daily.

"Granger"—a herculean task—has been several times attempted. The late Mr. Forster purchased a copy at a good price, extending to a vast number of volumes ; and, starting on this foundation continued to augment it till his death. It is now in the South Kensington Museum, to which he bequeathed it. A congenial writer has said *à propos* of this work—

"The system of which we now speak was not fully developed until the publication of Granger's 'Biographical History of England.' Something may be said in favour of those who, with gentle dulness and patient industry, haunted the print-sellers' shops to collect all the engraved portraits which Granger had enumerated. There is a charm

in the human face divine, although it must needs be powerful to call forth—as it does—twenty, or thirty, or fifty guineas from a collector's pocket for a coarsely executed cut of some Meg Merrilies, some Tom of Bedlam, or some condemned criminal of which the only value is being 'mentioned by Granger.' Strutt's 'Dictionary of Engravers,' to be completely 'illustrated' in a collector's eyes, should contain every work of every engraver mentioned in it (Hollar alone would cost ten thousand pounds could a set of his works be procured); yet this has been attempted."


These collections of engraved portraits have been always a "fancy" of cultivated amateurs, but a more costly hobby could not be conceived. The shape it has usually taken has been to gather all the celebrities of every English reign. There was sold in 1811 a "Catalogue of a Most Singular, Rare, and Valuable Collection of Portraits. These portraits," we are told, "formed the contents of the celebrated book 'cited by Granger,' and had been in the Delabere family for 150 years. Many of them are unique." It was natural that the

Rev. Mr. Granger, that ardent print collector, should be stimulated; and in his turn he stimulated Bindley. Hence we have, in 1819, the sale of "The Bindley Granger. British Portraits, from Egbert to 1817, also Topographical Prints collected by James Bindley, Extraordinary, Rare, Curious, and Unique Prints, sold by Sothebys. Three parts, names and prices, and portrait added. 4to, cloth, 15s." That is to say, Granger's biography was illustrated by this gentleman.


I once purchased a MS. folio, full of curious and varied subjects. Each was a full essay, stored with facts and most interesting reading. It was entitled "Literary Origins," graphic, bibliographic, and typographic, including articles on "authors, bookworms, dedications, engraving, folios, heraldry, music, reviews, quoins, broadsides, colophons, dates, finis, stereos."

But, in truth, these patient, laborious gatherers are more plentiful than would be supposed, and there is usually this melancholy *finale* to their labours, that they leave their darling collections behind incomplete, or on the eve of completion—

unacknowledged, it may be—to be turned to profit by others. The Dryasdust's friends know that he is busy—has been busy for the best years of his life—"making collections" for a great history of the stage, of MSS., or whatever the subject may be that he has chosen. He is seen at every auction buying autograph letters, rare books, "papers" of all kinds. The pile grows and grows. One of the most diligent of these explorers was Mr. Winston, who, early in the century, was manager of the Haymarket, with Mr. Morris and the younger Colman. This gentleman intended writing a history of the stage, actors, etc., and went on the principle of collecting every fact and incidental allusion to particular actors. From vast stores of old contemporary newspapers he cut out every paragraph and announcement that referred to each; these were pasted down under heads; in a particularly clear legible hand he then wrote out references, etc. He added enormous stores of autograph letters, agreements, wills, patents, etc., of which his position as manager gave him the command. He died—as of course—before he



could make a beginning, and ever since batches and masses of these papers turn up at auctions or dealers'. The late Mr. "O." Smith, popularly known as a player of grim melodrama, was a more conspicuous instance of the system. He planned a history of the stage on a vast and ingenious system. This was to transcribe, collect chronologically, downwards, every fact and writing bearing on the subject, set them in order, and thus let the story unfold itself. This amazing work was carried out in thorough fashion. He began with the very earliest times, transcribing all the Acts of Parliament, Privy Council orders, incidents from early newspapers : as he came to the era of printing, rare pamphlets, broadsides, etc., came in in their proper places. As the stream swelled, the whole of Davies's "Life of Garrick," and Boaden's lives of Kemble and Siddons, formed a sort of trunk, on which were grafted all manner of illustrations, filling up what the authors had left vacant. Rare etchings and caricatures, like the one of Mrs. Abington as Scrub, and Mrs. Garrick by the late George Cruickshank, brightened up the more serious



passages. This wonderful accumulation, which must have cost a vast amount of time, labour, and money, was elaborately mounted and bound into nearly forty quarto volumes, and now reposes in the British Museum. This worthy actor had gathered a good library of dramatic subjects, but it was, I believe, according to the usual fate of such things, promptly dispersed on his death. In the Museum also lies entombed the "collections" of Mr. F. Place, who had made copious MS. notes for a history of the drama. These fill two large closely written folios, but were never turned to profit. There they lie, brought together for the benefit of those whom it may concern, and many of whom will never acknowledge whence they obtained such useful aid.

But the most remarkable of these diligent collectors have yet to be noticed. His vast gatherings also lie entombed in the great mausoleum or Museum. This was Dr. Burney, Johnson's friend and admirer, himself one of the most agreeable, cultivated, and interesting men of his day, as indeed the father of "Fanny Burney" might be expected to be. He was a man of elegant tastes,

and much *recherche* in society, though his daughter's Minerva Press style of celebrating him in three volumes has not added to his fame. Acquainted with Garrick, Johnson, and the leading players and musicians of his time, he cultivated the most elegant tastes with a well-studied history of music, for which he made collections abroad and at all the courts. His main idea was to gather materials for a history of the stage, which (like so many others), he seemed to conceive, should be based upon "cuttings" from old newspapers, bills, etc. The result of these labours is to be seen in the Museum in some forty or fifty volumes, into which have been pasted all these extracts. On these the well-known Geneste based his laborious chronicle of the drama, one of the most useful and general accurate works ever written. But a more interesting monument of Dr. Burney's labours is the large collection of portraits and illustrations relating to Garrick. These fine memorials are laid down in great folios, and are pleasant to look over.


It may be added here, that in the Garrick Club there is a collection of half a dozen enormous atlas-



like volumes, presented by Sir C. Ibbetson to the Club. These are filled with grand mezzotints and engravings of English and foreign actors, either as individual portraits, or in scenes from plays. These are mostly in what is called "brilliant state," and give a truly noble and imposing idea of the profession. The faces and attitudes are clear, full of intelligence and spirit; the execution fine, the situations dramatic, the tones rich. When we put the portraits and pictures of our day besides these three works of art, we at once see what a serious falling off there has been. Of Garrick alone there is a huge volumeful, and an equal space is devoted to the Kemble family. These favourite actors are shown under all conditions on the stage, in their home and gardens, surrounded by their families, or even glorified in apotheosis. The value of such a collection is enormous; one single one, Zoffany's, the scene from Lord Ogleby and from "The Clandestine Marriage," being priced by the dealers at from ten to twenty guineas, according to its "state." Formerly these portrait mezzotints could be "picked up" for four

or five shillings; now the poorest fetch over a guinea. Standing in a shop recently, I noticed a pair of Turner proofs, "The Shipwreck" and another, which seemed brilliant enough; to a customer entering and demanding the cost, the reply, calmly given and as calmly accepted, was—seventy guineas!

Our grandfathers, in the days of dear newspapers, were fond of cutting "valuable extracts," full of useful information, which they pasted rather clumsily into volumes. These we sometimes find in old country houses, and smile as we turn over their somewhat antique and now exploded information. But in our times this has been brought into a system. There are many ladies who ply their large scissors every day; and for these special books with guards are fashioned for pasting into. One of them is filled up speedily. But it is extraordinary what a mass of curious and interesting information is to be found in the daily papers—such as, recently, the opening of the St. Gothard Tunnel; the charming letters of Mr. Robinson on *cinq-<sup>ue</sup>-cento*



medals ; the little controversies on pictures, old houses, etc. But, it is a false system to think of grappling with and dragging to shore all such matter. Life becomes a drudgery, and the material accumulates in vast masses, impossible to deal with ; every day the claims become larger and more importunate. The true and suitable course is simply to note and index such matter in a book, so that the files can be referred to. This is as much as can be attempted. I know of one gentleman who has carried on the opposite course for many years, cutting out, pasting in, and above all indexing, with the result that he has hundreds of such volumes, which he has probably not time to consult. Having contributed so much, he cannot draw back.

In connection with this matter, few will conceive how much outlay has to be incurred in writing an important work of, say, biography or history. Quantities of books have to be purchased, from which extracts have to be made. These must be either copied at so much expense of money or your own time (which is the same thing), or they

must be cut out and the book is destroyed. Then MSS. and letters in the Museum must be copied—a serious outlay ; there are extracts from rare books also to be copied ; and, finally, papers and letters certain to turn up at auctions, and in the catalogues of old booksellers, must be secured. These last are a most costly item, letters of great writers fetching great prices, if they be what is called in the catalogue “fine” or “characteristic” specimens.

The late Mr. Forster, who was truly sumptuous in his ideas, spared nothing in preparing to bring out a work. For his “Life of Swift” he had been accumulating papers for at least twenty years. These were of the most valuable kind. I fancy he secured whatever was offered on the subject — diaries, books of accounts, letters, original MSS. of works ; so that the outlay was great, and would scarcely have been repaid by the return. A book like Croker’s Johnson must have entailed enormous labour, as well as the collection of a vast amount of rare books : these there are booksellers who will undertake

to find and who must be paid handsomely. In my own humble way the books for a certain biography have cost close on £100 ; but they will serve, I trust, for many other works of the kind.

But to return to some triumphs of that curious art, which can scarcely be carried further. In the following collections the subjects could scarcely be more glorified ; and all that taste and expense could compass has been contributed. Mr. A. Harvey, some years ago, offered two volumes on Kemble and Garrick. Nothing better shows the position of the great actor, and the extraordinary interest he excites, than the amazing variety of these tributes to his fame. Mr. Boaden, in 1825, wrote two octavos describing his friend Kemble's life and career, in which there is certainly an intolerable quantity of Boaden to some shillingsworth of the actor. Now to see what can be made of this dry skeleton by taste and money.

"It is," says one enthusiastic *dilettante*, "rendered into a Matchless and Unique set of books by the addition of a splendid and interesting collection of

Illustrative subjects of the highest class, arranged as follows:—Vol. I. contains one hundred and five Portraits, including upwards of forty various Portraits of Kemble and Mrs. Kemble, and beautiful Drawings in Water-colours of Mrs. Kemble when Miss Hopkins, and Mr. and Mrs. Hopkins, her 'Father and Mother, and an original sketch of Kemble, and Autograph Letters of Kemble, Murphy, Mrs. Inchbald, Parsons, and Miss Pope. In Vol. II., seventy-three Portraits and Views, including an Original Unpublished Drawing in Water-colours of Kemble, and a beautiful Drawing in Water-colours by De Wilde of George Alexander Steevens, and Mrs. Wells; Autograph Letters of Emery, O'Keefe, Shield, Miles Peter Andrews, Madam Mara, Holcroft, and rare Autographs of Wilks, Booth, and Cibber, attached to an account for some article required for a play at Drury Lane. In Vol. III. are sixty-nine Portraits and Views, including a Unique impression of a beautiful portrait of Mrs. Siddons, and a Drawing of Mrs. Yates' monument, and Autograph Letters of Mrs. Siddons, F. Reynolds with a MS. Poem,

Mrs. Billington, Michael Kelly, Charles Macklin, and Noverre. Vol. IV. has sixty-seven Portraits and Views, including the fine Drawings in Water-colours of Mrs. Siddons, and Knight, and Downton by De Wilde, and Autograph Letters of Harley, Mrs. Bland, Edwin, Munden, Miss De Camp, Mrs. Dickons, Mr. Harris of Covent Garden, G. Colman, sen., William Godwin, Elliston, and Downton. Vol. V. shows sixty-one Portraits and Views, including a Drawing of Charles Kemble, and Autograph Letters of Mrs. Glover, John Palmer (2) and a MS. address spoken for the benefit of his Widow and Children, Thomas Dibdin, Curious MS. verses written by James Hadfield on the death of his bird during his Confinement in Bethlehem Hospital for shooting at George III. in Drury Lane Theatre, Blanchard, Peake, De Camp, J. W. Betterton, Mrs. C. Kemble, and Dimond. Vol. VI. has sixty-eight Portraits and Views, and Autograph Letters of Boaden, Miss Duncan, Macready, George Colman, jun., Incledon, and Mr. Whitbread, which concludes Boaden's 'Life of Kemble.' In Vol. VII. a 'Life of

Kemble,' fifty-two pages 8vo ; Poems addressed to Kemble ; Anecdotes and Cuttings from old Magazines, etc. ; an Authentic Narrative of Mr. Kemble's retirement from the Stage. 'Broad Hints on Retirement, an Ode to a Tragedy King,' addressed to J. P. Kemble, Esq., by a Theatrical Rebel, all illustrated with thirteen Rare and Curious Caricatures on Kemble, Mrs. Siddons, and Master Betty, and twenty-one fine Portraits and Tickets of admission to the Dinner. Vol. VIII. Sale Catalogue of Kemble's Library and Prints, wth Prices and Names. An Authentic Statement of the Dreadful Conflagration of Covent Garden Theatre, September 20, 1808. 'The Theatrical House that Jack Built,' with numerous cuts, a Satire on Kemble. O. P.'s manual. A genuine Collection of O. P. songs. 'What—do—you—want ?' explained in a Poetical Epistle from O. P. to All the Aitches. Account of the O. P. Dinner, etc. 'Reason *versus* Passion ; or, an Impartial Review of the Dispute between the Public and the Proprietors of Covent Garden Theatre,' etc., the whole illustrated with rare Caricatures. Vol. IX., 'The Rebellion ; or, All in the



Wrong,' a serio-comic hurly-burly, etc. 'The Whole Proceedings on the Trial of an Action brought by Henry Clifford, Esq., against Mr. James Brandon ;' with scarce Caricatures.

"The late Sir Charles Price was for many years engaged in collecting the Illustrations used for this work. Amongst the Portraits are many in choice early proof states, and from the very limited number taken off, may now be considered almost Unique. The whole are choice picked impressions ; and, considering the rarity, beauty, and interest of the illustrations, it is almost impossible that another copy of equal interest and beauty can be reproduced. The Life, Pamphlets, Autographs, and Illustrations have all been very neatly inlaid, and very elegant and appropriate Title-pages have been printed expressly for this copy, which now forms nine volumes small folio, and is richly bound in red morocco extra, double bands inlaid with green, gilt edges, by Riviere." The price, not by any means the value, was £150, which was soon given by an American.

This same Boaden was entrusted with the


editing of Garrick's vast mass of correspondence, of which only a tithe was published, in two ponderous quartos, a memoir being prefixed. Mr. Forster secured what were not thus used, which may be seen in his collection at Kensington, richly bound in russia—a long series of folios. These two quartos, taken in hand in the same fashion, were “rendered into a magnificent memorial, by the addition of a fine assemblage of nearly four hundred beautiful illustrative prints, comprising numerous rare mezzotints, and other engraved portraits, all fine impressions, many being choice proofs; interesting Views, including two very fine Water-colour Drawings by Samuel Ireland, a very large and desirable collection of Autograph Letters, scarce Tracts on Garrick, Cuttings from Newspapers of the period, etc.; the whole of the illustrations carefully arranged throughout the books, and all made of a uniform size by being very skilfully inlaid. New Title-pages have been printed expressly for this Collection, which is now arranged in six vols. 4to, and splendidly bound by Riviere, in French green morocco,

richly tooled broad borders of gold on the sides, gilt edges, £130."

Here is a succulent specimen. We seem to lap up the sentences. It invites a gastronome to be purchaser. "Profuse collection," "fine and rare mezzotints," are good terms and inviting.

"'Anecdotes, Observations, and Characters of Books and Men,' collected from the Conversations of Mr. Pope, and other eminent persons of his time, by the Reverend Joseph Spence, edited with Notes and a Memoir of the Author by S. W. Singer; one volume folio, extended to three volumes, by a profuse collection of fine and rare mezzotint and other engraved portraits and autograph letters, divided as follows :—Vol. I. contains ninety-eight Portraits and Views, and a fine Drawing of Shenstone's portrait (engraved as a frontispiece to an edition of his works), and of Pope's Villa, and Twickenham Church, with Pope's Monument, etc., and Autograph Letters, signed, of Pope, very fine; Dr. Johnson, very fine; Bishop Warburton, Horace Walpole, MS. Verses addressed to Spencer, and Signatures to Documents of Sir

Robert Walpole, Wm. Congreve the Dramatist, and Louis the Fourteenth. Vol. II., frontispiece, View of Pope's Villa, after J. M. W. Turner, by Pye, a splendid proof in the earliest state, before any letters, on India paper, very rare ; seventy-eight Portraits and Autograph Letter of the Duke of Buckingham, addressed to Pope, also his Signature to a document ; Dr. J. Wharton, Harley Earl of Oxford, the Earl of Peterborough, Eustace Budgell, and Signatures of George the Second when Prince of Wales, rare, also his Signature when King ; the Marquis of Halifax, G. Stepney, and Sir Wm. Turnbull, and Drawings of Milton's Monument, and portrait of Sir T. More. Vol. III., sixty-three Portraits, Autograph Letter of Lord Chancellor Cowper and Ralph Allen, and Signatures of the Duke of Newcastle, Duchess of Marlborough, Lord Godolphin, David Mallet, James the Second when Duke of York, Speaker Onslow ; Colley Cibber, Wilks, and Booth, to a paper relating to Drury Lane Theatre, very rare ; appropriate Title-pages printed for this copy, richly bound in red morocco extra, ornamented borders on sides, gilt edges, by Riviere."



The original work can be picked up for a few shillings, but by this system of rich dressing it reaches the figure of one hundred and sixty guineas. But what is this to a poor quarto by Hayley—the Della Cruscan—a “Life of George Romney,” with portrait, a good copy of which can be had for five shillings? Under this cookery see what an appetizing dish it becomes :

“Romney (George), A magnificent and unique copy of Hayley's Life of this celebrated Artist, inlaid and bound in five volumes, folio size, twenty-six and a half inches by eighteen and a half inches, and illustrated with a splendid collection of Portraits, Views, and Autograph Letters, including about eighty subjects engraved after Romney's own Paintings, among which are a number of beautiful proof impressions of his exquisite Portraits of Lady Hamilton ; Titles and an Index of Contents printed expressly for this copy. Richly bound in red morocco extra, gold borders on sides gilt edges, by Riviere.” The price for this book in its new state is £350.


Or is not this more appetizing still ?

“Thomson (James), ‘The Seasons,’ illustrated with beautiful engravings by Bartolozzi and Tomkins, from Pictures painted for the Work by W. Hamilton, R.A., one volume, large folio, 1796. Divided into Four Volumes, as follows: Vol. I., Spring, illustrated with fifty-three extra Engravings and two Drawings. Vol. II., Summer, illustrated with sixty-four extra Engravings and six Drawings. Vol. III., Autumn, illustrated with sixty-eight extra Engravings and one Drawing. Vol. IV., Winter, illustrated with thirty-seven extra Engravings and one Drawing. Making altogether two hundred and twenty-two extra Engravings and ten Drawings. The Engravings comprise a most charming and beautiful Collection of the choicest description of Subjects in Mezzotint, line Engravings, and the Bartolozzi School, illustrating Occupations, Amusements, Sports, Pleasures, and other various attributes of the Seasons, ancient and modern, by and after Hollar, Goltzius, Watteau, Lancret, Boucher, Hearne, Hamilton, Constable, Collins, Bartolozzi, Wheatley, Gainsborough, Singleton, Woollett, Vivares, J. M. W. Turner,

Landseer, etc., etc., and fine Etchings of Landscapes by Waterloo and Strutt, all brilliant impressions, many being choice proofs before letters. Among the Drawings is a very fine one in water-colours by R. Hills, Sir W. C. Ross, etc., and two very fine ones in Indian Ink, by John Marten; the whole forming a most delightful collection of subjects, illustrative of this charming descriptive poem. The four volumes are splendidly bound in green morocco extra, the sides beautifully ornamented and lined with cream-coloured paper, with rich gold borders, gilt edges, by Riviere, rendering this one of the most sumptuous and magnificent copies ever offered for sale, £240."

Such are the costly enjoyments of the opulent *literati*.

I have before me now the figure of yet another of my booksellers, who lived in a little den of second-hand books, under a sort of half light which fell upon his yellow face, shaded with the blue of rare or imperfect shaving. As you passed, you always saw him behind his half desk, half counter, bent down writing. He knew little of



the antiquarian side of bookselling, but bought and sold old school-books ; and transactions of this kind were always going on, some serving-maid or urchin coming in with a Latin Grammar or Colenso's Arithmetic, which he would turn over with an assumed contempt—part of his trade—then, as out of favour to the vendor, would consent to treat. Invariably a loud hem preceded some very low offer, as invariably accepted. That hem came of nervousness ; for he was a conscientious man, and did not relish what is called beating down. He had been a country schoolmaster, was wonderfully well read, and collected vast stores of what is called "folklore," which he narrated in clear, effective English. His books are, indeed, authorities on the subject, and attracted much attention when they appeared. There was a simplicity about his style and manner that recalled Goldsmith, and I well remember a remarkable passage in one of his quaint letters, written from the country to Town, where he had never been : "I can picture you now," he said, "seated at your desk, writing ; or possibly you *may be walking*,



*book in hand, under the broad shady trees of Trafalgar Square."*

There is something almost pathetic in the case of the patient, never-flagging book-lover and book-delver, who day after day and year after year plods on, reads and indexes, and cuts and catalogues, and pastes and stores away, all from the pure love of his occupation, even till he grows old and feeble and (worse to him) his well-worn eyes begin to fail. The zest, the enjoyment he takes in his monotonous task never weakens. And yet, in his case, there is not, as in other instances, the ultimate crown of publication, print and proofs, to make a pleasant termination to his labours. These things we have read of, and there are pleasant romances founded on the work of the unrecognized "hodmen." But they live and pursue their task among us. The "old booksellers" can name many such, whose honest enthusiasm and faith carries them on.

Some years ago, I was busy editing an English classic in three volumes, and this becoming known in the usual way, I received a letter from a gentle-

man living in the outskirts of London, saying that he also had been considering the subject, and that his marginal notes, etc., were at my service. There presently arrived two quartos thus copiously annotated. It must be said that these remarks were rather criticisms and opinions than contributions of fact, and were therefore of little help for my purpose. However, after perusing them they were duly returned. Unfortunately, by an error in direction or from some other cause, the volumes were lost, literally through a miscarriage. He bore this with wonderful good-nature. After the first disappointment, I went to see him at his modest residence, and found him living alone. But then was revealed to me for the first time what one of these conscientious hard-workers really was. Almost at once he dismissed the misfortune that had brought me, owing to his roused enthusiasm at having a sympathizer to whom he could display his cherished labours.

Such labours ! The house seemed to be turned to a sort of factory. Books were piled up on the floor ; cardboard boxes, such as are seen in mil-

linery shops, were ranged all round. These held the "collections," which grew and grew by the labours of each day. These collections were on all subjects, most of which I have forgotten. One enormous and steadily growing one was on "Cookery"—the cookery of all ages and nations—a vast subject, as may be conceived. Another, of a more interesting kind, was a collection of all the foreign phrases in familiar use in the English language. His system was this. He received every newspaper and carefully read them, marking every phrase or word of this kind. A secretary came for a number of hours, who cut out and catalogued all that was marked. It was the same with his reading of books—all was marked, cut out, or copied, and distributed among the various collections. This gentleman was, I believe, a man of fortune. What became of his collections I know not, though I remember hearing that they were bequeathed to one of the universities.

Not very long ago, repairing to one of my favourite "old booksellers," who lives not a hundred miles from the Museum, and asking him

"had he anything in my way"—a favourite question (for there are what may be called "curios" in literature as in art)—he produced to me five ponderous folios well bound and lettered. These were filled with close and legible writing, were duly indexed, paged, had prefaces addressed "to the reader"—were, in fact, almost ready for the press. One appropriately dealt with a subject on which I was then completing a work. I at once accepted them at the modest price named—three guineas, and they were sent home.♥ On examination they offered a truly melancholy record of enormous labour and hope deferred; for they had been offered to publishers and declined, which was to be seen from a forgotten letter or two left in the volumes. They were the fruit, literally, of twenty or thirty years' work. The laborious compiler had died, so I fancy, and his darling MSS. "sold for a song." They consisted of—

"BOOKS AND THEIR BELONGINGS," which dealt with everything that could be connected with a book, "embracing," as the author said, "the earliest accounts of alphabets, bibliography, book-

binding, censors, copyright, dates, dedications, electrographs, errata, fates of books, gold-printing, illuminations, indexes, logography, MSS., missals, numerals, opisthography, quaint titles, paper, punctuation, publishing, scarce books, scribes, typography, text writers, xylography, watermarks, writing."

Next we had "AUTHORS AND ALL ABOUT THEM:" their births, marriages, deaths; their calamities, conversation, carelessness; their precosity, peculiarities, punishments, etc. "Authors.—Antipathies of Authors—Authors at fault—Authors and Dedications—Authors and Echoes—Authors of Remarkable Books—Authors rejected by Publishers—Authors and Critics—Authors, Correctors of the Press—Authors who did not 'write' their Works—Authors' Curious Title-pages—Authors' singular Motto Titles—Allusive Names of some Authors—Authors' Castigators—Authors who were Early Risers—Absurdities of Authors—Authors by Profession—Authors devoted to Literature—Authors with an Alias—Authors who ruined their Booksellers—Authors, Past and

Present—Authors upon Authors—Authors' Rejected MSS.—Authors' Dislike of their own Language—Adulation of Authors—Anachronisms of Authors—Antimatrimonial Authors—Bulls of Authors—Birthplaces of Authors—Blunders of Authors—Burial - places of Authors—Bookstall - hunting Authors—Calamities of Authors—Conversation of Authors—Contraries in Authors—Carelessness of Authors—Deaths of Authors—Dream-inspired Authors—Difficulties of Authors to get before the Public—Diligence of Authors—Diet of Authors—Dress of Authors—Dispositions of Authors—Deathbeds of Authors—Favourite Books of Authors—Families of Authors—Freaks of Authors—Foolish Authors—Friendship of Authors—Generosity of Authors—Grub Street Authors—Habits and Toils of Authors—Honours to Authors—Imitations and similarities of Authors—'Imposing' Authors—Imprisoned Authors—Late Learning of Authors—Lingual Attainments of Authors—Literary Fertility of Authors—Literary Despatch of Authors—Literary Residences of Authors—Longevity of Authors—Literary Pseudonyms of Authors—Last

Days of Authors—Modern Authors upon the Old—  
Modest Authors—Memories of Authors—Manu-  
scripts of Authors—Monkish Authors—Mean  
Origins of some Authors—Mottoes on Title-pages  
—Night-working Authors—Negro Authors—Names  
assumed by Authors—Old Age of Authors—Old  
Authors criticised by Modern Ones—Origins of some  
Authors—Origins of some Authors' Works—Punc-  
tiliousness of Authors—Peculiarities of Authors—  
Punishments of Authors—Precocity of Authors—  
Payments to Authors—Prolific Authors—Private-  
Press Authors—Plagiaries of Authors—Pious Old  
Authors—Quaint Book Title—Rewards of the  
Old Authors—Relics of Authors—Remarkable  
Books—Royal Authors—Remuneration of Authors  
—Rare Prices of some Authors' Works—Singular  
Method of Study—Sepulchres of Authors—Schools  
and Colleges of Authors—Social Characteristics of  
Authors—Taverns and Clubs frequented by Authors  
—Unhappy Marriages of Authors—Whimsical  
Authors.”

Next came the “THEATRICAL HANDBOOK,”  
being a budget of collectanea, concerning plays,

players, and playhouses, from the first dramatic performances 2460 years since, to the era of Queen Victoria. Here were detailed accounts of every playhouse, the first English female actress, the earnings of actors, Joe Miller, etc. ; indexes filling many crowded folio pages. The book at this moment might be sent to press. At the same time, it is filled with extracts and cuttings yet unplaced, showing that the author was carrying on his work. "Books and their Belongings" had this

"PREFACE.

" 'As little bees from every place bring home that which is profitable ; so a student doth except from every author that which suits his purpose.'—Wits' Academy, 1635.

" 'A Book which assembles Facts from all their scattered sources may be considered as a useful and important auxiliary of Wisdom.'—Sir Rd. Philips.

"After the reader has conned the Title-page it is perhaps hardly required of the author to say anything in explanation of a publication of this nature, because, as Butler has said, 'there is a kind of Physiognomy in the Titles of Books no less than in the faces of men, by which a skilful observer will as well know what to expect from one as the other.' . . .



“The author has therefore wandered from the diurnal to the dictionary ; and, not seldom, a short paragraph only has been his reward, after literally hunting through numerous folios, plunging into cyclopædias, exploring newspapers, searching magazines, ransacking prefaces, dipping into introductions. . . .

“In every instance recourse has been had to the best accredited sources of information, which (as just suggested) have been so numerous that it is conceived better, with the limited space, to omit the formal enumeration of the authorities consulted. Consequently the writer is enabled to furnish his readers with the very diagnosis of a Book, its outside and its inside, with the history of each particular—of paper, ink, type, binding—when each ‘stop’ was introduced and by whom—‘Colophons, Title-pages, Figures, Letters, Dates,’—as also what were the precursors of books ; who were the first writers of books, first readers of books, first printers of books, first sellers of books, and together such a store of other minutiae as only the yearning bibliomaniac would crave after. As for

the numerous and varied styles of Engravings, Prints, Book Illustrations, etc., space is better saved by simply referring to the 'Summary.'"

Though Mr. Irving's success does not date farther back than a few years, the amount of illustration he has been the cause of is scarcely credible. A friend and admirer of his, following the example of Dr. Burney in reference to Garrick, I have for some time past set myself to the pleasant but somewhat onerous duty of collecting these various trophies of popularity, and, without actually overtaking the artist, have just paused in my labours to survey the result. Five great handsome folios, duly bound, lettered, with title-pages printed, form this illuminated and illustrated record. They contain pictures of every kind and from every source—from illustrated papers, magazines, etc. There are scenes from plays, playbills, *menus* of the dinners, etc., given by the artist, paragraphs in abundance, with a host of criticisms, articles by the actor himself, etc. In short, these extraordinary volumes contain everything about him. There are verses in praise and satirical; there are pamphlets—

and there have been a large number issued—there are articles from *Blackwood*, *Macmillan*, and innumerable other sources. Even the yacht in which he took his excursion, and his “dog,” have been engraved. As an instance of this abundance of adornment, the pictures, some of large size, that illustrated the “Merchant of Venice” amount to nearly thirty; those of the “Corsican Brothers” to over forty. There are some forty or fifty portraits—nearly two hundred scenes from plays; then come speeches, letters, etc. The criticisms are by such leading critics as Clement Scott, Kendall, Tom Taylor, Knight, Moy Thomas, Purnell, Martin, Savile Clarke, Burnand, Wedmore, Morris, Labouchere, Dutton Cook, and many more. There are innumerable “leaders” from newspapers. There are, of course, abundance of caricatures; but the successful shuttlecock is always struck from both ends. Many of these are rather good-humoured, with travesties of scenes from the plays. Two artists, Bryan and Furniss, are singularly successful in giving the actor’s marked outlines, and seem to have made a study of him. One is responsible

for hundreds of small sketches, some no bigger than a threepenny piece. Yet these four massive folios represent but seven or eight years of the actor's life, and the collector is already in a state of embarrassment as to his future course.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### OLD CATALOGUES.

THERE is something piquant in the looking at the first obscure edition of a celebrated author's works, such as Byron's "Hours of Idleness," printed at Newark (though it is not scarce). Books printed early in the century, or at the end of the last, have a quaint air, and some are pretty copies. Books of poems, etc., printed about sixty years ago, are often pretty little volumes, such as the early editions of Lamb. How precious Tennyson's early works have become will be seen from the following :—

“Tennyson (Alfred) Poems by Two Brothers, 12mo, LARGE PAPER, UNCUT, boards as issued, £10 10s. 1827. Poems by Alfred Tennyson, 12mo,

uncut boards as issued, £14. 1833. Poems, 2 vols. 12mo, uncut boards, 6s. 6d. 1842."

Their merits rise in growing capitals—"large paper," "boards as issued," "UNCUT!" This fancy for what is "uncut" is not unreasonable, as it, of course, allows of binding with a larger margin.

Here is Milton's "Paradise Lost," the first quarto edition, "very fine copy in morocco, super extra, gilt edges, dated 1667, and published by Peter Parker." Many are likely enough to have "picked up" what they fancy to be a first edition: but let them not so hug themselves. This should contain the very rare first title, in the first state. "A copy from the library of G. C. Way, the antiquary, vastly inferior in condition to the above, sold by auction, in July last, for £22 10s. Copies are often described as being 'first editions,' and marked at apparently low prices, which, upon inspection, prove to have the second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, or eighth title-pages."

A curiosity must be the "First book printed on paper made from straw, published in 1800, an historical account of the substances which have

been used to describe events and to convey ideas from the earliest date to the Invention of Paper ; by Matthias Koops, royal 8vo, red morocco, gilt edges. £1 16s."

What a rarity, and an interesting one too, must be a little book printed at the "Frogmore Lodge Press. Miscellaneous Poems printed by E. Harding for Her Majesty Queen Charlotte to give to her select friends, only thirty copies printed, small 4to, mottled calf, gilt edges, by Bedford. £4 4s. 1812. With a MS. note of Harding the printer inserted."

Here are two little 12mo volumes, of not very brilliant-looking type and paper, but neat, yet marked £15!—the first edition of our old friend Goldsmith's "Vicar." All Goldsmith's early editions ("The Traveller" and "Deserted Village" appeared as quartos) fetch large prices; though lately, turning over a book box, I came on a little collection of "Poems for Young Ladies" selected by the amiable doctor, secured to me for 6*d*.

Few people have an idea what magnificent, sumptuous books are royal or "elephant" folios, in

rich mellow old binding, the paper edges thick, bent, and waving, the gilding the colour of old gold. These noble tomes ripen with age. To this class belong those superb works describing coronations, processions, and other festivals which it was the fashion thus to celebrate. There was usually an elaborate, finely engraved portrait, with a noble title-page, the letters thick and substantial, and a flamboyant coat of arms with boys, Cupids, etc., fluttering round. Then followed some thirty or forty plates, showing the procession entering the cathedral or palace, and all done with a minute care, as though by "ocular admeasurement," as Lamb said of the picture of the ark. The sides of such volumes generally have some royal device emblazoned, or it may be those of a cardinal—always an effective decoration. The days of quartos and folios are gone by, but it is impossible not to look at quartos with respect. They set off the binding. Folios are too unwieldy. They burst their joints by their own weight. Fine old quartos of Gibbon, Addison, Walpole, Racine, La Fontaine, turn up regularly at sales, the latter set off by beautiful



engravings, and can be had at moderate prices. But there is an illustrated folio *La Fontaine* which brings a great price. I once secured a noble Gibbon, whole russia, "tooled," gilt edged, but broken, as it is called, at the joints, six volumes—"armfuls"—for a few shillings.

Huge works on foreign theatres are plentiful, and I own to a fancy for gathering them. All the great theatres of Europe have been thus celebrated, *Scala*, *San Carlo*, *Bordeaux*, etc. That of *Bordeaux* is worthy of the subject—perhaps the finest monument of the kind existing. It gives beautiful copper-plate engravings, done in a large flowing style, of every side—of the exterior and interior, with plans, sections, etc., of the most elaborate kind, so that the whole could be rebuilt at once. There is a pleasant effect of spaciousness in turning over these great sheets, next perhaps to that of contemplating the original.

One of the most beautiful, tempting books ever seen was an early edition of *Chaucer*, circa 1480, printed in black letter on a yellowish satiny paper, and which had been bound carefully and soberly

about thirty years ago. There was no incompatibility between the old body within and the new coat. It lay open with the weight, and there was a harmony in the tones and arrangement of the type that must have struck an unprofessional. A country clergyman had greedily secured this for, I think, four pounds. I am told there are such ardent, eager purchasers, that when a rarity is announced in catalogues, they arrive betimes at eight o'clock, before the shop is opened, so as to be first! A Caxton is, of course, not to be secured, save at a very high figure; but it will be seen that the amateur can secure a specimen of what is about as rare, at a not excessive price. Thus, "Wynkyn de Worde. 'Gradus Comparationum cum verbis anomalis simul et eorum composituso.' 4to, black letter, morocco. £8 8s. Imprinted at London by Wynkyn de Worde in Flete Strete, at the sygne of the Sonne (1527). Consists of eight leaves in remarkably fine state; unusually the case this Latin accidence is chiefly written in English. Caxton's device is on the last page."

How courteously, and with what smacking of


lips, our bookseller speaks of the following treasures:—"Grained red morocco extra, full gilt back, gilt edges, by J. Clarke, £20. Argent., Johannes Mentelinus, circa 1466. A singular magnificent specimen of early printing, and of such extreme rarity, that it does not appear to have been known either to Panzer, Santander, De Bure, and other Bibliographers. Humphrey, in his 'History of Printing,' has described Mentelin as one of the secret workmen of Guttenberg, and his types bear a resemblance to those used by Guttenberg, and that Mentelin was the real inventor of the art, and that Strasburg was the original seat of the invention, and describes Guttenberg as the robber of his priceless secret. The above edition is, however, of equal, if not of greater, rarity than the one printed by Guttenberg, which recently sold for upwards of £400: see printed cutting inserted, where a copy is priced £200."

And again: "'Plotini Opera Omnia,' 2 vol. folio, *editio princeps*, very fine copy on large paper, in rich old red morocco, full gilt back, gilt edges, by Derome, most beautiful state, £8 18s. 6d.

Florentiæ, A. Miscominus, 1492. These splendid volumes have graced the shelves of the La Valliere, Gaignat, and Roxburghe Libraries. See Dibdin's glowing description as regards the beauty and rarity of the edition : he devotes three whole pages to it, and says that the noble owner has great reason to class it among the most precious rarities of his collection. MacCarthy's copy sold for 1020 francs, Sir M. Sykes's, £48, and the present in the Roxburghe sale for £52 10s."

Another treasure or curiosity would surely be this work : " ' Henry VII. Necessary Doctrine and Erudition for any Christen Man, sette forthe by the Kynges Majeste of England,' thick 12mo, with many large and rude woodcuts, large sound copy, in old half calf, of the greatest rarity, £4 18s. John Mayler, 1543. The only copies of this most rare volume known to Lowndes were the one sold at Sotheby's in 1826, and the one in the Lambeth Library. There is none in the British Museum or Bodleian Libraries ; it is the only edition with woodcuts, and the one that was sold at Sotheby's was priced by Thorpe, the bookseller,

ten guineas." And above all, a treasure of amusement, for its strange, quaint illustrations, is the celebrated picture-book of the fifteenth century, the "Nuremberg Chronicle:" "Splendid old woodcuts. 'Chronicon Nurembergense (Auctore Hartmanno Schedel) cum Registro,' the Great Picture-Book of the Middle Ages, illustrated with an immense number of very spirited woodcuts (several very large) by M. Wolgemut (the master of Albert Durer) and W. Pleydenwurff. A very large, complete, and fine copy, with capitals beautifully illuminated in colours and all the blank leaves, in the original oak boards, rare, Nurembergæ, A. Koberger, 1493. £25. Folio. From Dunn-Gardner's Collection, and probably the Tallest and Finest Copy in existence, after Lord Spencer's. In 1873 a copy measuring eighteen by twelve and a half inches was sold for £25, as the finest then known; but the present one measures nearly eighteen and a half by twelve and a half inches on the paper only, while along the boards it is nineteen and one-eighth by thirteen inches, and above three and a half inches



thick (!) This is the grandest specimen of Koberger's celebrated Press, and every year is more sought after. Mr. Dunn-Gardner, among other interesting information, pencils inside: 'On the cover of a copy sold 3rd March, 1879, was written, "Sir Paul Methuen paid £79 for this book;" and on the title was the autograph, "Ad. Wright, pret. £16 10s., A. Dom. 1580"'—a very large sum at that time, which shows its estimation. This copy contains the addition 'De Sarmacia,' ten pages, with large engravings at end, and on fly leaf a legible long MS. dated 1577. Dibden remarks, 'Let me entreat you always to pay marks of respect to the productions of the First Printer at Nuremberg, Anthony Koburger. His ample margins betray a thoroughly well-cultivated taste.'

One of the dandy fancies of letters is the following:—"Books Printed on Vellum. Dufresny, 'Œuvres Choiesies,' 2 vols. post 8vo, uncut, French boards, only nine copies printed on vellum, beautiful specimen. £6 6s. Paris, 1810. 'Les Provinciales,' par Pascal, 2 vols. 8vo, only one copy printed on vellum, Renouard's copy, morocco,

edges uncut, each volume in a case. £12 12s. Paris, Renouard, 1803. Saurin, 'Œuvres, Comédies, Tragédies and Poesies,' post 8vo, beautifully printed upon pure vellum, only two copies so printed, uncut. £3 3s. Paris, Didot, 1812."

But this suggests the famous Sunderland, or Blenheim Library, now in course of dispersing, and abounding in these treasures of copies in vellum. Large paper copies—that is, printed with extra-sized margins, an octavo page being displayed on a quarto page—are not now in fashion, and the cost is serious; for the form or the sheet of, say, sixteen pages has to be taken to pieces and widened out, and this, on a hundred sheets, comes to a great deal.

We have spoken of the Stowe Granger; yet finally, by the inevitable, inexorable law, the Rev. Granger himself was "dispersed," and the first portion of the collection of the Rev. James Granger sold off during six days' auction—"of great interest," we are told, "to the historical student, as it constitutes a kind of Biographical Dictionary of the period of William I. to James II. inclusive."

But, as a matter of course, there were not wanting persons to make collections of these very lists of collections, and accordingly we find catalogues described and sold *in* catalogues: "Catalogues (Sale) of nearly all the Great Libraries that have been sold for the last hundred and fifty Years, bound in thirty-one vols., 8vo, some thick, many with Prices the Books sold for, bound in half calf and other bindings. £2 18s. 1736, etc. A most valuable collection; includes some of the earliest Sales of Books by Auction. They were collected by a celebrated Bibliographer (Mr. John Bryant, part editor of the New Lowndes, and compiler of the celebrated Daniels Catalogue)."

Catalogues of great sales are often found to be priced throughout. These, as may be conceived, are of great interest and value, as the editions are generally described with great accuracy. Some are, indeed, pleasant reading, such as that of Strawberry Hill, Stowe, and others. It is extraordinary what collections can be made of a single department—"Block-books," Bibles, and a very favourite one, that of editions of Horace,



which would need a library in itself. Of Bibles the late Duke of Sussex was a great collector, his sale occupying sixty-one days, and the catalogue filling six volumes small quarto! The famous sales and catalogues are well known. The Libri, Perkins, Sir M. Sykes: "Sykes (Sir M. M.), Splendid and Curious Library, Manuscripts on Vellum, Large Paper Books, Tracts, Early Poetry and Printing, of the most excessive rarity. Three Parts, complete set, twenty-five days' sale, Prices and Names. Roy. 8vo, calf neat. £1 1s. 1824." Dr. Farmer's, which lasted forty days; George Stevens'. Not less inviting, too, is that of George Smith, sold in 1867, and which is described as "Very Valuable Library in all Languages, large papers, and splendid bindings, Bibles, Liturgies, Splendid Works of Engravings, Early Quarto Plays, Ballads, Chap-Books and Drolleries. Twenty-two days' sale, priced."

The Perkins sale and its effects are thus enthusiastically described: "Formed by Henry Perkins, comprising many Splendid Illuminated MSS. of the highest class, a remarkable Collection of

Ancient Bibles, examples of Printing on Vellum, Choice Specimens of Early Topography, the Four Folio Editions of Shakespeare, Valuable County Histories, and Fine Books in all Classes of Literature, sold by Auction, by Gadsden, Ellis, and Co., in the Great Library at Hamworth Park, June 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 1873. Imp. 8vo, with nine facsimiles of Paintings in MSS. The excitement caused by this magnificent sale (undoubtedly one of the finest in this century) will long be remembered. Newspapers contained leading articles upon it, magazine writers described it, and some editors actually had telegrams sent each day from Feltham, giving the prices fetched by the principal lots. The sale included the famous Mazarine Bible on Vellum, which sold for £3400."

"Men of the Time" is a well-known dictionary of contemporaries. But who knows that the edition of 1856 "contains the curious and amusing error in the article of Samuel Wilberforce, Bishop of Oxford: 'A sceptic as it regards religious revelation, he is, nevertheless, an out-and-out believer in spirit movements.' This paragraph had slipped out of

the previous article of 'Robert Owen' into the article on the 'Bishop of Oxford.'"


Macaulay, it will be remembered, used to collect street ballads, and had made a large gathering. Not long ago I was offered no less than three thousand, including some on the battle of Bunker's Hill, for, I think, a five-pound note. The following is even more tempting:—"Street Literature. Remarkable and Desirable Parcel of General Old Stock, purchased long since from time to time from a *bona-fide* old Street Chanter, now dead, and probably the Last of his Race (for the present degenerate specimens, together with their ware, are, in their own phraseology, 'Shoful').—It includes (I.) nearly eighty of the Penny Song Books, and Sheets of Songs, such as 'Lover's Harmony'—'Jovial Fellows'—'Budget of Mirth'—'Comus's Chaplet'—'Convivial'—'Free and Easy'—'Inledon's Harmony'—'Young Men and Maids' Delight'—'Madame Vestris,' etc., etc. (II.) About the same number of Single Sheet-Songs, together with about (III.) five hundred Farthing Slip Songs (Murders, Scandals, Satirical, Political, Passing Events, Acci-

dents, Funny, Fistic, Thieves', and Low Life, and all other kinds of Songs) from the Classic Presses of Jemmy Catnach, Pitts, Birt, Disley, and other Seven Dials' Worthies ; in most cases embellished with woodcuts of all styles of Art, from that of Bewick to that which a Schoolboy would disdain. Fifthly and Lastly, a little lot of Broad-sides, including some specimens of the fine Religio-Moral Broad-sides of the Repository, with cuts by Bewick, published at the beginning of this century ; and a few nice Large size 'Last Dying Speeches,' among which are those of Tawell the Quaker ; Mary Ball of Coventry ; Rush, the Stanfield Hall Murderer ; Palmer of Rugeley ; and others, with illustrations lugubrious in more senses than one. Price for this most interesting lot, £3 13s. 6d."

What an entertaining entry is the following ! I have spoken of Mr. Winston, the laborious theatrical collector on actors. Next follows a small section of his labours referring to "Theatres in the Provinces at the end of the last century. A MS. Diary of above four hundred pages in Winston's autograph, with an Index describing Theatres,

Buildings where Plays could be acted, Audiences, Pieces and Theatrical Gossip relating to above three hundred Towns and Villages and Places in the Provinces, 4to, £15 15s. This MS. is full of interest for the Theatre in the provinces in the last century. A specimen of its contents is appended.

'Battle. About 25 years ago (1775) one Gilbert played in the Great Hall, Battle Abbey; no one came after, till Henley, about ten years ago (1790), who played in a barn just out of the town, then in a large coach-house down the George Yard; and last winter they built a new theatre in the principal street, a very neat house, will hold £40. Charge nine guineas. Very good town. Edinburgh, 1800. The Circus, Jones Proprietor. Play every evening, and preached in on Sunday by the Methodists, who pay £50 per annum for it. The Pulpit stood on the stage. For wantonness once the curtain was taken up, and the scene that stood during the service was Botany Bay, painted for some new piece by Jones. Macclesfield. Old Stanton, Manager, 1795. Played in a temporary building. The dressing-rooms were the stalls of



a stable, and the roof so bad, they had pattens and umbrellas to walk to the wings ; people in the pit called for blankets to keep them from catching cold, and actually sat with umbrellas in the pit. Miss Mellon played Lady Teazle, and waited at the (door) to go on the stage with an umbrella. It was occasioned by an unexpected rainy evening. Stanton was very correct in beginning at the time advertized. He went from Macclesfield on business, deputed his son manager, who was not so correct as his father, who unexpectedly returned about a quarter of an hour after the announced time of beginning ; finding no performance going on, or performers dressed, he rung up the curtain, and made every one go on in the state they were. Young Stanton went on without breeches." Old Stanton, it may be added, was the country manager who waited on Johnson and Boswell at Lichfield, to ask their patronage.

Or who that had twenty guineas to spare would grudge it for such a kind of entertainment as follows ?—"Ancient Prints by Collaert, De Jode, H. Cock, Heemskerck, Visscher, Wierx, M. de

Vos, Sadeler, etc., etc., bound in four thick oblong volumes, nearly One Thousand Five Hundred splendid Old Prints, by the above Masters, newly bound in dark morocco, super extra, gilt edges, by Townsend, Twenty Guineas. 1600-43. The Gem of Mr. Bragge's collection, it forms a delightful assemblage of the most beautiful works of the Old Masters. Such another collection could not be brought together, as many of the prints are of great rarity, and must have cost Mr. Bragge a Hundred Pounds or more. The price now asked is not the cost of the elaborate bindings of the volumes, being about fourpence each print." There is a bitter truth in this remark. The collector collected for the purchaser, and laid out probably five times the amount it is sold at, for the pleasure of another! Alas! he never keeps an account of or reckons up what his treasures cost, otherwise he would be shocked and ashamed.

Here is a specimen of a right noble sort of work, really a handsome thing to look at. "Pynson, 'Intrationum excellentissimus liber necessarius quibus leg. hominibus: fere in se continens quem

medullam diversam materium ac plit. tam realium, personalium, et mixt,' etc. Folio, black letter, calf neat. £9 10s. Lond. in vico vulgacitur Flete Strete in officina honesti viri Ricardi Pynson, 1510. A fine specimen of Pynson's press, having the title printed in red and black, a full-page woodcut at back of title, and the printer's name at the end of the volume. This copy is remarkably large, measuring thirteen and a half inches by nine, while the bottom margins measure no less than two inches; it has also the original blank leaves both at the beginning and end."

The following is connected with a long-forgotten bitter controversy:—"Bunn (Alfred), 'A Word with Punch on the respective Merits of his three Puppets, Wronghead (Douglas Jerrold), Sleekhead (Gilbert A'Beckett), and Thickhead (Mark Lemon),' with caricature portraits of the three Satirists, 4to, pp. 12, original illustrated wrapper, quite clean, very scarce. £2 10s. With this copy is bound in half calf, a folio sheet published by Hone, 1821, with numerous woodcut Illustrations by George Cruikshank, entitled 'A Slap at Slop.' There



is a manuscript title, in the handwriting of the late George Daniel, couched as follows :—“ A Word with Punch,” by Alfred Bunn, very curious, very facetious, and very scarce ; to which is added by way of contrast “ A Slap at Slop,” also scarce, one of the many dull, indelicate, and riff-raff expectorations of a democrat and a dunce.” Like G. Daniel !

Of a different class is the “ ‘ Commune of Paris Le Pere Duchêne,’ complete in sixty-eight numbers as issued, with rude woodcut and different running title to each number, 8vo, sewed, Paris, 16 Ventôse, an 79, to 3 Prairial, an 79 (*i.e.* March to June, 1871). The above is a complete copy of the celebrated ‘Père Duchêne,’ published during the reign of the Commune in Paris in 1871. Its rigid suppression on the triumph of legitimate authority under Thiers renders a complete series a great rarity. The three writers of this periodical of sad and terrible memory, were Eugène Vermersch (a *littérateur* and poet of real merit), A. Humbert, and M. Vuillaume ; and they emulated, if not surpassed, the violence and coarseness of language

which distinguished the 'Père Duchêne' of Hébert and his associates in the Great Revolution. The last number is (strange to read!) a declamation against the want of vigour and severity of Raoul Rigault and Ferré, both of whom were soon after shot by order of the Legitimate authorities (Rigault summarily, Ferré after trial, with Rossel, at Satory), and are now regarded as martyrs."

Again: "Typographical Curiosities. Campbell (J. M.), 'Sermons and Lectures,' Greenock, 1832. 2 vols., fcap. 8vo, printed on paper manufactured with white lead, weighing 2 lbs., boards, unopened edges. 10s. 6d."

These speak for themselves:—"D'Horsay, or the Follies of the Day,' by a Man of Fashion (John Mills), 1844. 8vo, with portrait, vignette, and ten clever plates by 'George Standfast,' in the original cloth, uncut, £2 12s. 6d. An extraordinary and truthful *exposé* of the fast life of fashionable London thirty years ago. Anecdotes concerning, and the escapades, vices, and adventures of, Count D'Horsay, the Marquis of Hereford, the Earl of Chesterlane, Mr. Pelham, General Reel, Lord

George Bedtick, Mr. George Bobbins, auctioneer, Earl of Raspberry Hill, 'the circumcised driver of the cabriolet' (Lord Beaconsfield), Lord Huntingtower, the Countess of Blessington, and other well-known personages are depicted with a piquancy that makes the narratives most amusing. Not only high life, but, where connected with the sketches, low life also is described, including descriptions of several notorious characters. The original owner of this copy has written in the names, but, without this assistance, they are too thinly disguised not to be palpable at first sight. The plates contain portraits of D'Orsay, Fanny Ellsler, Lord Chesterfield, Mr. George Payne, the Countess of Blessington, etc., etc. The present copy contains the chapter describing the closing scene of the life of the 'Marquis of Hereford,' which is often wanting. Its scarcity is so great that a copy sold recently for £6." "*Grammont, 'Mémoires de la Vie du Comte de Grammont (parle Comte Antoine. Hamilton) contenant particulièrement l'Histoire Amoureuse de la Cour d'Angleterre sous le Regne de Charles II.*' First

edition, sm. 8vo, very fine copy in red morocco super extra, dull gilt edges, by Kaufmann, A Cologne, chez Pierre Marteau, 1713. £3 3s. 'Une particularité curieuse distingue l'édition originale. L'éditeur a pris soin d'indiquer en italique tous les mots sur lesquels il pensait que devait s'arrêter l'attention des lecteurs. On aurait peine à croire, sans en juger par soi-même, à quelle quantité de mots s'est appliqué ce procédé.—Gay.' The Duplessis copy, the condition of which could hardly be finer than the present, sold for one hundred and eleven francs."

Tastes now run greatly on choice first editions. Indeed, not long ago an ingenious gentleman collected a whole library of first editions, which of course, in due time, were sold by auction. It may be said generally that all first editions, even of late writers, are scarce and desirable. The very look and air of them is different; they seem shy, hesitating, and retiring, different from the bold, assured air of the later ones, when success has been attained. This is noticeable in the early editions of Lamb, Coleridge, and other poets.

The two following specimens are worth redeeming from the obscurity of a catalogue. The first, from Sir. E. L. Bulwer to his publisher, a specimen of true modesty, dated August 31, 1830: "I have received the MS. of the third volume of the "Disowned," . . . the attempt at robbery, as you term it—shall be omitted. . . . Will you let me know whether you consider the objection you have raised of a similarity between the speeches prior to the deaths of Mordaunt and Talbot, of sufficient consequences to require the omission of one of the speeches. If so, I shall leave out Talbot's. I wish you would also let me know whether you think *Ld. Ulswater's* death at all Theatrical—I am inclined to think it is,' etc., etc. A very desirable specimen." The next a sound piece of advice from Mr. Tennyson: "Write verses in your leisure hours if you like it, but never let them interfere with your proper work in life"—well worth the nine and sixpence asked.

"What a warm day for tragedy!" writes Talma to a friend. "Bloomfield," writes Coleridge to Haydon, "has been in considerable distress owing

to the failure of his bookseller. A subscription has been opened for him, and the Duke of Grafton, whose tenant he was, has given £5!!! The same illustrious person sold the Library which his father had collected. God help England if his Grace of Grafton be a fair specimen of the patrons of the day. But I know that he is not."

"My dear Miss Cushman," writes Samuel Rogers, "*Any day or Every Day! I shall be delighted to see you.*"

Some allusions by Edward Kean have a painfully significant interest. One is dated Paris, July 11, 1824, and relates to the action *Cox v. Kean*: he says, "I dare say many of my letters are very silly, and will create some laughter in a Court of Justice, but they are not more preposterous than those of greater men, who have been, like me, the victims of the *amor parum honestas*; for instance, the Duke of York." Again: "Dublin, August 26, 1824, 'I cannot send you any money, for the best of all possible reasons, I have none to send—for the first time in my theatrical career.' The remainder of the letter is occupied with full details

in relation to the Cox affair, and relates several circumstances which, if they do not excuse his offence, in either a moral or legal view of it, certainly afford a measure of palliation, an opinion which the jury seemed to entertain upon the evidence adduced, by their verdict of one farthing damages. Belfast, Nov. 26, 1824, relative to the 'Cox' affair: 'I positively declare against the use of Mr. Drury's name: I owe everything to the family, and cannot consent to blend the sacred name with two such 'rascals as myself and the Alderman;' with other passages strongly recriminatory of the other side."

Here we come upon an "Autograph of Hannah More, Cheap Repository Tracts, five woodcuts, fine portrait of Hannah More inserted, and Autograph on fly-leaf (see Note), 12mo, half bound, 10s. 'My old Friend William Upcott requested Mrs. Hannah More to oblige him with her Autograph, she replied "Yes, with much pleasure, if you 'Mr. Upcott will oblige *me* with 10s. for a Charity for which I am Collecting," my warm hearted Friend was too gallant to say No to a Lady, she then

produced this Volume of the cheap Repository Tracts, and wrote the text of Scripture from Psalm 23 (on fly-leaf) with her Name and date of Year.—J. B.’ ”

The following is a well-known but rare book :—“ Beaconsfield, ‘The Revolutionary Epick,’ the Work of Disraeli the Younger, author of ‘The Pyschological Romance,’ Moxon, 1834. Both Series, 2 vols., 4to, vol. i. bound in half calf gilt, vol. ii. in boards, uncut, very rare, £3 3s. An exceedingly interesting copy, bearing the following inscription in Lord Beaconsfield’s handwriting :—‘The Honble. Mrs. Norton, with the Author’s kindest complts.,’ and on the opposite leaf, in her hand, the following :—‘Caroline E. Sara Norton, Her valued Book.’


“According to Cocker” is a well-known phrase, but scarcely any book is so rare as the first edition : “Cocker (E.), ‘Arithmetic, being a plain and familiar Method,’ etc., portrait, calf of the time, a very good clean copy, 21s. 1694. An early edition of this celebrated and popular work in constant use during the latter part of the seven-



teenth and the whole of the eighteenth century. So rare are copies of the editions before 1700 that Dr. Dibdin was never able to see one prior to the thirty-second, which appeared some time after 1700, the twentieth edition appearing in that year. Of the First Edition, which is said to have been published in Sept., 1677, for T. Passenger on London Bridge at the price of 1s. 6d. (though others give the date 1678), such is the rarity that only three or four copies are known, and those that have turned up for sale have continually advanced in price; Dunn-Gardner's copy in 1854 bringing £8 5s., Geo. Smith's (with the Decimal Arithmetic, 1st edition) £18 15s., and Sir W. Tite's (which sold at Corser's sale for £12 5s.) £14 10s. Poor Cocker did not live to enjoy the great renown his book obtained, as he seems to have died in the year of its first appearance.' The above is Dunn-Gardner's note, and the present copy is from his collection."

The following are classed as "Keaniana":—  
"Play-bill of May 24, 1827, with part of the Frill of Kean's Shirt torn off by him while performing

Sir Giles Overreach—Playbill of Oct. 1, 1827, Charles Kean's first appearance—Playbill, Feb. 21, 1810 (at Haverfordwest), including both Mr. and Mrs. Kean (the former as Harlequin in 'Mother Goose')—Playbill, Feb. 12, 1814, Kean's first appearance as the Duke of Gloucester—Playbill, Jan. 26, 1814, Kean's first appearance at Drury Lane; other Old Bills, the Young Roscius, in 1805, etc.—Newspaper Cuttings, Kean in America, Cox *v.* Kean, etc. Tavern Bill at the 'White Hart,' Salisbury." In another catalogue there are letters "from Thomas Campbell to Lord Holland, dated Alfred Place, 1837, thanking Lord Melbourne for employment for his nephew, which gives him £150 a year, 'no bad provision for a hardy, frugal Scotchman, reared on crowdy and sheep's trotters;' for himself he has 'no claim on the Whigs as a body, for they have provided for me thirty years ago beyond my deserts;' from the same to Northcote, the painter, who professes to have been hurt at some account of his conversations, saying 'the infernal Hazlitt shall never more be permitted to write for the



*New Monthly.* From Sir Joshua Reynolds to Valentine Green, the engraver, dated Leicester Fields, 1783, refusing to allow him to engrave the portrait of Mrs. Siddons as the Tragic Muse, concluding, 'I shall follow your advice (to give for the future unequivocal answers), and now inform you that you shall not do the print.' From Mrs. Siddons, inviting some one to see her in 'The Provoked Husband,' for seats for which piece she is 'almost torn to pieces.' From Sir Philip Francis to Lady Holland, 1805, saying, 'Next to the misery of being sixty years old, the hardest of all things is to be forty miles off. I live by contact, I die by intervals. If ever young again, my second youth shall be devoted to you. Helas, belle dame, les souvenirs du passé font le tourment de l'avenir.'"


We find the poet laureate, in a letter to that bookseller of the poets, Edward Moxon, "accepting his proposal to go shares with him in the risks and profits of the publication of his book, and asking to have the proof-sheets twice sent to him for correction." To the same

bibliopole, the poet Campbell confides, in 1837, that he "has been reading Sir Egerton Brydges' Autobiography: 'Such an exhibition of a man's ulcerated vanity creates one's disgust.'"

Then we have "A Water-colour Drawing, being the Portrait of a Sailor, as he attended Lord Byron's Funeral, preserved in a velvet case. £5 5s. The letter is an account of an English sailor in the Greek service who constantly saw Byron, and who followed him to the grave. His statement having been taken down, Charlotte Wilson forwarded this copy to Byron's sister:—'so kind-hearted and generous, bless ye, he was always doing good, and did not mind what perils he underwent. There was not a man in the whole ship or among all the Greeks but what *almost adored him*.'"

For eighteen and sixpence we could procure an odd MS., to wit, Queen Charlotte's "'Establishment of Ordinary Wages and Allowances yearly by Us unto Our Officers and Servants, etc., under Our Sign Manual' (1761), twenty-four pages of very neat writing, 8vo, cf., curious."

Some one collected and put aside the answers



to the Duke of Wellington's invitations to dine with him on the anniversary of Waterloo ; they amounted to a hundred and thirty. But every year they dwindled away.

Then we have "Five Songs in the Handwriting of Burns, of rather a roysterous and free nature, some of which have never been published. They are addressed to Mr. Robert Gleghorn, Farmer, Saughton Mills, near Edinburgh. Two of the songs are included in very humorous and characteristic letters."

A sketch of a famous book-collector, by Rev. A. Dyce "to Sir Egerton Brydges, Nov. 1, 1833 : 'Booksellers and Book-buyers cannot at present think of anything but Heber's Library, which, if a will is not found (and none has yet appeared), must come to the hammer ! Poor man ! he expired at Pimlico—in the midst of his rare poverty—without a friend to close his eyes, and from all I have heard, I am led to believe that he died broken-hearted ; he had been ailing for some time, but took no care of himself, and seemed, indeed, to court death. Yet his ruling passion was strong till

the last ; the morning he died, he wrote out some memoranda for Thorpe, about books which he wished to be purchased for him. He was the most liberal of book-collectors ; I never asked him for the loan of a vol. which, if he could lay his hand on it, he did not immediately send me,' etc. A splendid letter, upwards of eighty lines closely written." What constitutes "a splendid letter" ?

Lord Byron writes "from Dorant's Hotel (Albemarle Street) to John Hanson, Esq., Chancery Lane: 'Dear Sir—I shall be particularly obliged by the loan of one hundred, *promised* last night, and for this and other sums lent by you I shall sign a receipt with great pleasure. I hope this will not find your determination altered by last night's repose. Yours truly, BYRON.'

Scraps from Lamb's letters to Walter Wilson in 1828, with notes of books to be referred to, and other hints for Defoe's works then in preparation. "Capt. G. Carleton wrote his own Memoirs. Puzzelli puzzles me, and I am in a cloud about Donald McLeod." Also to the same, Enfield,

15th Nov., 1829. "Thanks for a copy of Defoe. Mary is by my side just finishing the second volume. It must have interest to divert her away so long from her modern novels. . . . Hazlitt is going to make your book a basis for a review of Defoe's novels in the *Edinbro'*." A more singular specimen is the following, "addressed to Hone. 'Miss Hazlitt (niece to Pygmalion) begs us to send you for Mr. Hardy a parcel. I have not thanked you for your Pamphlet, but I assure you I approve of it in all parts, only I would have seen my Calumniator at hell, before I would have told him I was a Xtian, *tho' I am one*, I think, as much as you ;' a fine specimen, £5 5s."

Then Moore, from Sloperton, in 1831: "My finances are in a most deplorable state; I have been passing three days with the Duchess of Kent and our little future Queen; we had a great deal of Music, the Duchess sang some of my Melodies with me better than I ever heard them performed."

The following is curious:—"Mr. Johnson begs the favour of Mr. Cadell that he will send his binder two 'False Alarm' and two 'Falkland

Islands,' one of each to be bound together in half binding. Let it be done as soon as it can.' Auto-graph. II. Copy of an important Letter of the Doctor's in the hand of Malone, dated Nov. 10, 1783, concluding, 'As we daily see our friends die round us, we that are left must cling closer, if we can do nothing more, at least pray for one another . . . and prepare ourselves for the last great trial," etc. One page, folio. Together, £1 17s. 6d." "Dr. Barnard, Bishop of Killaloe. Two pp., 4to, 1791. 'Surprised at the King's *marked* disapprobation of the Academy's Present to Johnson's Monument.'"


Cobbett writes on a "printed card, with autograph signature, 'No Irishman will be employed on any account, even if he be the bearer of this card.' To a Bishop. Curious." And again: "'I hope we shall, with Waterloo's resolute aid, live to see the bull frogs fall, and Cobbett's corn rise up all over England and Scotland, the Irish preferring the "nice maly potatoe," it being so well adapted to soften their organs.' Speaks of O'Connell, etc., etc."



Mr. Harvey offers a proof-sheet of Goldsmith's "Natural History," with a marginal note in his hand-writing, "This is very correct."

Who would not like to secure "Autobiographical Memoir" of Etty, R.A., "in the form of a Letter to his Cousin Mr. John Clark, seventy-nine pages in the autograph, and signed, Oct. 28, 1848. Unpublished. This Autobiographical sketch was the only one made by the artist, and is full of interesting details of his public and private life, his paintings, etc.; it was drawn up for the purpose of publication."


Documents of quaint, deep historic interest occasionally turn up, as "An Order of Admission to the Trial of Louis XVI., signed by the President. One page, 8vo, with a memorandum, in the autograph of Sir John Coxe Hippley: 'This day was the last the King appeared at the Convention, when M. de S. made his defence, Dec. 26, 1792. This ticket was presented by the Sec. of State.'" And almost as curious the "Order for the Arrest of Louis Napoleon, issued by the French Republic, Juin 13, 1848. One page, 4to. Dated from Meulins, and signed by the Prefect."



It is surprising how official letters of State escape from royal custody ; such, for instance, as "the letter of Bonaparte, as First Consul, L.S., in the name of the French People, to his Britannic Majesty, King George III., May 5, 1802, on vellum, a beautiful specimen of calligraphy. Had received the King's letter intimating the recall of Francis James Jackson, Minister Plenipotentiary to the French Republic, whose conduct had merited his entire approbation ; hoped that on his return he would convince the King of his personal sentiments, and sincere disposition to maintain the union and good feeling then existing between the two nations. Signed Bonaparte, and countersigned Ch. Mau. Talleyrand."

I have also seen an official letter of George IV.'s, announcing his accession to the French Court ; a really beautiful specimen of handwriting and which was purchased by the British Museum.

A series of letters relating to Rousseau seem to make up quite a little story. In the old *European Magazine* will be found other letters bearing on the same transactions while he was in England



with his friend Devonport. "Rousseau. Wooton, April, 1764. Bill paid for R. from Dec., 1766, to May, '67 (curious items), (C. Hall for 3 bushel of Malt for Mademoiselle, 15s.; cheese, 3d. per pound). Marshall Conway. 4to, 1757. A most interesting letter, detailing particulars of his interview with George III., and the pension of £100 granted to Rousseau, although refused by his friend David Hume. Viscount Nuneham (E. Harcourt) to Hume respecting Rousseau. Two and a quarter pp., 4to. M. Laleand. 4to. To the same, 'We have cried over your letter to Mr. Hume,' etc., etc. R. Davenport. Intimate and kind friend to Rousseau. One page, folio. In angry terms. Price £3 10s. together."

The following burst from Thomas Campbell is characteristic, concluding thus: "Did not your heart's blood boil with indignation at the hypocrisy of the scoundrel Nicholas in coming on board the *Talavera*? Would to God they had mopp'd him with boiling pitch."

Some autographs are amazingly rare, such as Sterne's and Smollett's:—"Smollett (Ann), Wife

of Dr. Tobias Smollett. A.L.S. One full page, 4to. Dated Leghorn, Sept. 23, 1783. Written after the Death of the Novelist at Leghorn. Complaining of her misfortunes and distressed situation, etc., of which she gives painful details. Highly interesting, rare, and curious letter. (Mrs. Smollett was the accomplished and beautiful Anne Lascelles.) £2 8s."


It is curious to find Edward Gibbon, Esq., enforcing the payment of his rents: "'I must insist upon the tenants making up their rents to Lady Day—they must pay up one hundred pounds this month, and you must remit to Daniel Lascelles, Esq., Member of Parliament in London, anybody will tell your carrier—where he lives, he is a great merchant—I saw your brother, sister and children a little while ago. They are all well as we are here, except myself, we are now in the middle of wheat harvest—a good saving crop,' etc., etc., etc. £4 4s."

Again, this is interesting: "Mill. The following in his Autograph. One page, 4to. 'Mr. John Stuart Mill, one of the Assistant Examrs. to the

E. I. Co.' 'Mr. Mill is one of the Candidates for Adms. into the Athæneum. He has been regularly proposed and seconded, and he now communicates the above particulars, which he is informed, were accidentally omitted at the time of Proposition.' Scarce. 9s."

The Duke of Sussex thus comments on Queen Caroline's trial: "'The business of the Queen (her Trial) has at length finished, which is a great blessing, for at the same time it was a flagrant injustice, it was creating irritation in the country,' etc., etc. 4s. 6d."

I have spoken of the taste for what are called Elzevir editions, which seems carried to excess. It is like that for etchings, which are growing monotonous. The French are issuing vast numbers of dainty books, certainly beautifully printed, and possibly intended to show off binding as exquisite. One or two firms, such as Lemerre, have distinguished themselves in this direction. A popular book, for instance, was some time ago issued by the house of "Glady Frères," which may be fairly considered as a work



of art. The work is "Manon Lescaut," a small octavo of not more than three hundred and eighty pages, and the price thirty francs. Paper, etchings, vignettes, printing, introduction, and editing are all by different hands. To show how carefully considered was the mere impression, I give the list and order of copies, which is printed on a fly-leaf:—"1. A small number taken off on Turkey Mill paper. There have been also printed for amateurs three hundred and thirty-three copies, each numbered, and comprising the following:—

|                           |     |     |     |     |     |
|---------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| On choice vellum 'raisin' | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1   |
| „ choice parchment ditto  | ... | ... | ... | ... | 2   |
| „ Japanese quarto         | ... | ... | ... | ... | 30  |
| „ Imperial Whatman        | ... | ... | ... | ... | 50  |
| „ Chinese                 | ... | ... | ... | ... | 50  |
| „ Van Gelder's Dutch      | ... | ... | ... | ... | 200 |
|                           |     |     |     |     | —   |
| Total                     | ... | ... | ... | ... | 333 |
|                           |     |     |     |     | —   |

These are refinements indeed.

## CHAPTER XXIII.


## BOOKSTALLS AND BOOK-BOXES.

TO the economical book-hunter, such as I am, it is a pleasant compensatory reflection that the grand collector pays dearly for his enjoyments, and if he greedily snatch at the best dishes, he has to pay an enormous reckoning. He has his treasures and his prizes to show to the admiring and envious visitor ; but he has many a twinge in private when he thinks what his hobby has cost him. His extravagance is veiled by the reflection that he has secured a few "odd lots"—"now worth ten times, sir, what I gave for them"—for a song. It is a pleasant reflection that your own judgment and easy exploration, not your cash, has secured for you things of value. I myself belong to this category, and have found a great pleasure

and a lightening of one's City walks by searchings and visits to the "book-boxes" and obscure sale-shops of the "trade."

The late Mr. Huth—a name familiar to few outside the bibliomaniac profession—was, perhaps, the most lavish collector of our time. His splendid library, the gathering of which occupied his life, is illustrated by a sumptuously printed catalogue filling five grand volumes. Here are nothing but copies in "fine condition." There is, indeed, this piteously grotesque side to the mania, that after a lifetime devoted to collecting, the heirs are delighted to use this labour to their own, and promptly despatch the contents to the auction-room. I have been assured, indeed, that there are instances of the "collection" being hurried off even before the funeral of its owner.

Many a book-maniac has dwelt on the satisfaction found in periodically investigating the "boxes" of old books exposed at the doors of old book-sellers. This is akin to drawing from a lucky-bag, and not long ago I thus procured, at one haul, three choice specimens of elegant printing—a





charming little Aldine quarto; a Bodoni, most elegant of typographers, with its binding and rich gilt edges; and a Baskerville. These, with a little furbishing up, were worthy of a place in "any gentleman's library." Nay, for a shilling or two, the careful sportsman who beats the ground scientifically may light on a little bit of old French binding, of crimson morocco embossed in faded gold, and which a little repairing and varnishing will put in good condition. It is extraordinary at how cheap a rate a collection, choice and interesting, can be made, and a single bookcase, or a cabinet or two, will hold a number of dainty little volumes, each of a particular interest and well worth showing to a visitor. There are china collectors on this economical but intelligent plan, who secure a trifling cup or figure as a specimen of each ware, and thus can have a fairly representative gathering at very little outlay, on which a lecture might be given of a very entertaining kind. On the other hand, I have often heard the wealthy collector sigh vexatiously as he shows you his treasures, and declare "*that he was ashamed to*

*think of all the money they had cost him !*" Indeed, the aristocratic collector who has formed a handsome library is involved in expenses of the most serious kind. Binding alone is a frightful source of outlay. Rare books to be bound are worthy of, and require, binding by masters in the craft; and the binding of a fine old quarto by Mr. Rivière would take, say, six months, and an outlay of from twenty to thirty pounds.

On the four "first folios" of the divine Williams an essay might be written. There are so many variations, typographical blunders, different "states," that the investigation becomes interesting. A single leaf of these precious volumes has a market price of seven or eight shillings, for these are of value for completing defective copies; while a frontispiece fetches pounds. There are very few copies that are not thus "made up." When you come to buy a folio, it is necessary to collate every page, and at particular places you will find wrong pagination (p. 64, say, following 32). Most copies have lost their last two or three pages, or their first. A really fine copy, complete, without


facsimile pages, is rare : a fine set of the four was lately offered for £450. The copy sold in 1864, at £716, was, I believe, the one purchased by the then Miss Burdett Coutts. I believe it would be impossible to find a really perfect copy of any of the four folios, as dealers have a fashion of "making them up" from other damaged and imperfect copies. This system of repairs, facsimiles, etc., has become quite an art and defies detection. I believe there is a gentleman at the Museum who, for a few shillings a page, will supply any missing leaves in facsimile. But it is often forgotten that a facsimile of a printed page or engraving really differs enormously from the original, in the fact that the one is an *impression* in low relief of a plate or types, the other merely an imitation on the surface. The one, therefore, has shadows from the dark spaces ; the other none.

Yet, with these extravagant prohibitive prices, the ordinary outsider and economical book-hunter may, if he use pains and discretion, secure something in this direction that, at a low price, will approach very nearly to the pleasure imparted at

so extravagant an outlay. I myself possess a capital sound "second folio," wanting only four leaves, which cost me £3 15s. I have also the fourth, which cost me the same sum, but it lacks a good deal. A worthy bookseller once offered me a sort of damaged fragment of a backless and sideless folio, but still substantial, for thirty shillings or two pounds. On collating it, at the end unluckily, I found it was only a second edition. It was later disposed of to a painstaking bookseller, who, collating it leaf by leaf, found that half at least was of the first edition. He had by him another fragment of the first edition, and by adding facsimiles made up a fairly good first folio. My own disappointment was extreme.

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were: 1. Recognizing the nautical skill of the Captain during a tempestuous Voyage. 2. Subscription to purchase a piece of Silver Plate. 3. Appointment of a Committee. Then follows an account of the Captain attending to give thanks, the amount subscribed, and the inscription to be engraved on the plate, the whole finished with a very characteristic signature of Dickens. No account of this occurrence is given in Forster's 'Life of Dickens.'” But here we must pause.



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